

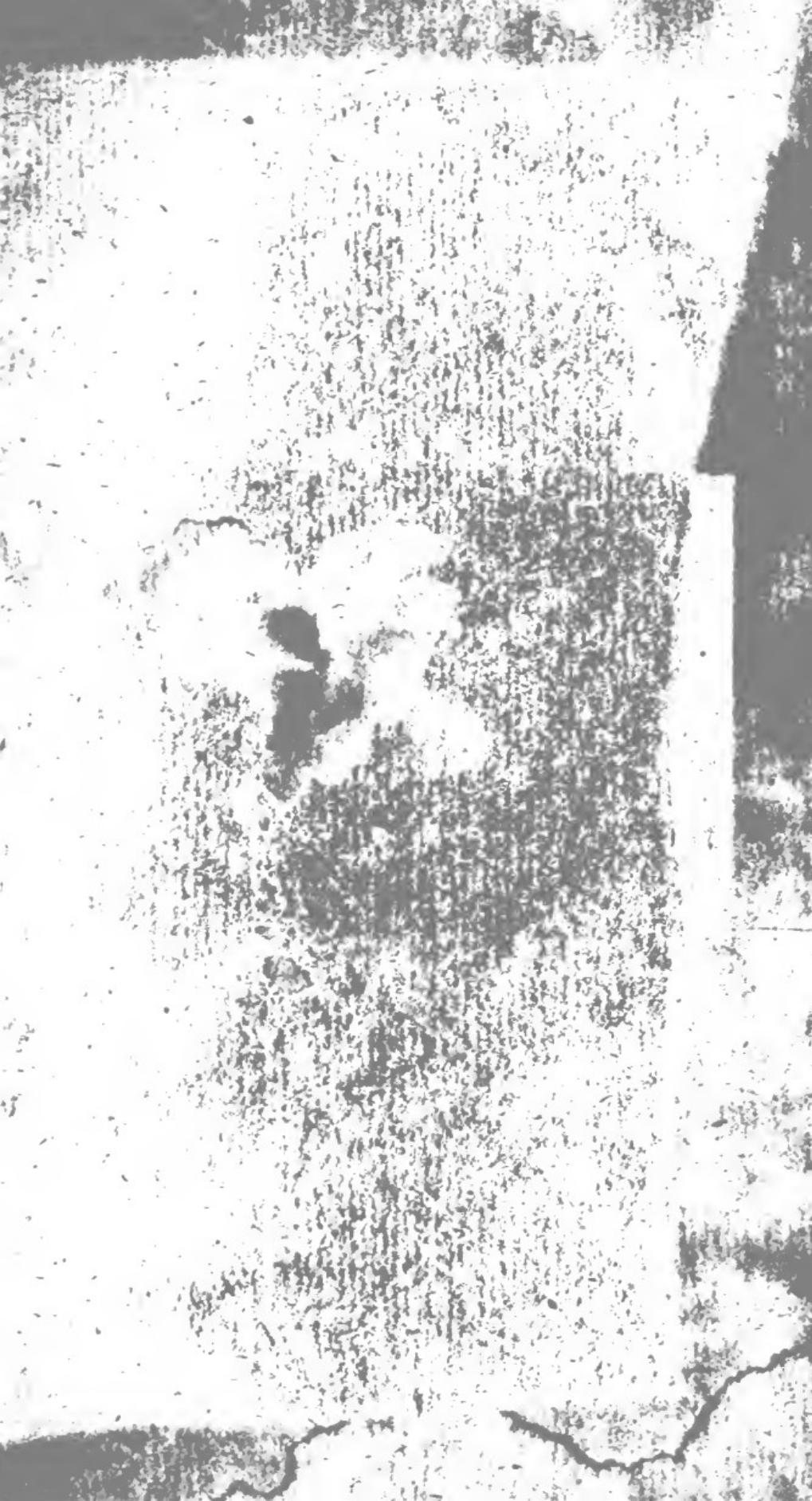


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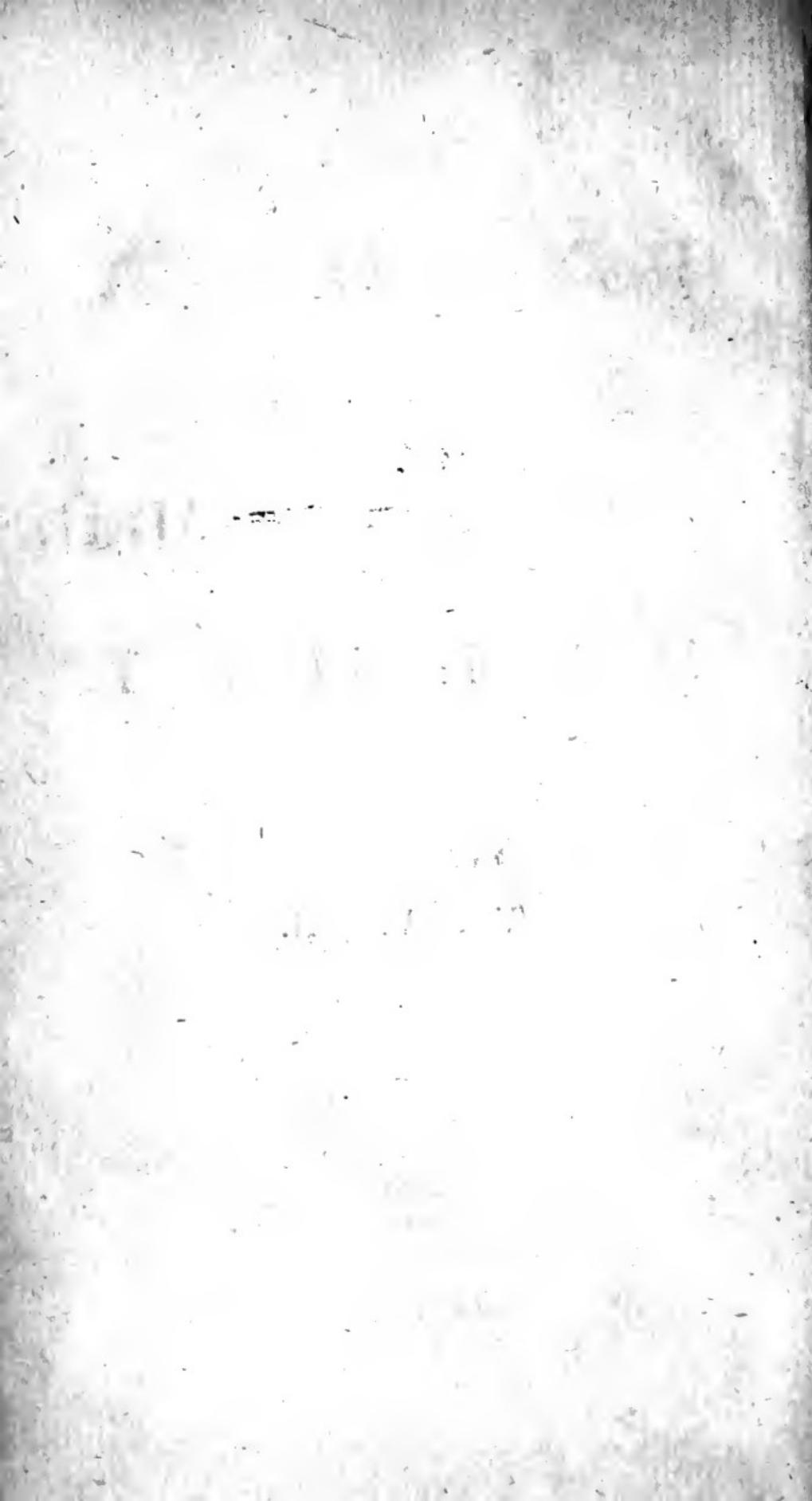




T H E

H E R M I T.

V O L. II.



T H E
H E R M I T.
A N O V E L.
BY *Mrs.* A ~~LADY.~~ ATKENS.
IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. II.



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T. I. M. R. E. H.

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WILDE, Oscar, 1854-

IN TWO VOLUMES

M. D. W.

1890

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T H E
H E R M I T.



C H A P. XV.

“ କୁମାର O U are not ignorant, my
“ କୁମାର Y କୁମାର fair audience, of my fa-
“ କୁମାର mily, since it is the same
“ with this gentleman’s, whose fa-
“ ther and myself were the only
“ children our parents ever had.”

VOL. II.

B

“ My

THE HERMIT.

“ My brother being the eldest was
“ brought up to no profession; but I,
“ who had nothing to expect but a mo-
“ derate fortune, when about nineteen,
“ my inclinations first consulted, was
“ settled in *London* with a merchant of
“ great eminence.

“ AFTER I had been with this good
“ man upwards of three years, he not
“ only gave his business, but also his
“ only, his lovely, his most amiable
“ daughter to me.—It is impossible
“ (continued he) you can be a judge
“ of the greatness of this last gift: you
“ did not know my *Emily*.—Her
“ beauty, though exquisite, was the
“ least of her charms:—she had a
“ mind replenished with every virtue;
“ a disposition so mild, so exalted, yet
“ so sweetly condescending, that I could
“ dwell forever on her perfections.

“ How

“ How supremely happy did the
“ first ten years after our marriage
“ find us : each returning month has-
“ tened to me with some new felicity.
“ I will only here recount a few of those
“ blessings I then enjoyed :—riches
“ sufficient to satisfy the most ambi-
“ tious mind ;—a wife on whom I
“ doated ;—children who early pro-
“ mised to be an honour and a com-
“ fort to their parents.

“ I HAD already two sons, and my
“ *Emily* in a way to add to that num-
“ ber, when clouds dark as night be-
“ gan to obscure all my brighter pro-
“ pects. Their first appearance was in
“ the death of that worthy man who
“ gave being to the object of my ten-
“ derest love.

THE HERMIT.

“ I WAS obliged to suppress what I
“ felt on this occasion, and console
“ his afflicted daughter, whose grief,
“ though calm, I knew to be more destruc-
“ tive than if it had raged with
“ violence: but soon, too soon, was
“ the dear creature roused from her
“ lethargic sorrow.”

“ IT was now my *Emily's* turn to
“ display her soothing eloquence.—
“ How did the sweet monitress ex-
“ pate on the instability of sublunary
“ enjoyments! how did she bring the
“ death of her father to convince me,
“ that I had not a greater right to com-
“ plain at the hourly expected loss of
“ mine!

“ THOUGH I knew her arguments
“ to be founded on wisdom, I did
“ not just then feel all their energy.—
“ Oppressed

“ Oppressed with grief, I determined
“ to set out immediately for the
“ *Grove*. A letter my brother sent
“ by one of my father’s servants did
“ not seem to hint such expedition
“ was necessary; at the same time
“ it informed me, the best of parents
“ was dangerously indisposed.

“ My wife could not be prevailed on
“ to stay behind.—Though I dreaded
“ the consequence of so long a journey
“ to a person in her situation, her im-
“ portunities got the better of my scrup-
“ ples. Wretched, unfortunate com-
“ pliance!

“ AFTER spending an hour in my
“ counting-house with my partner, on
“ whom I had the greatest reliance, we
“ stepped into a chaise, taking with
“ us our eldest boy, a lovely child, a-

“ bout seven years old. Oh heaven !
“ how can I repeat what followed
“ (exclaimed the good old man) ! It
“ unhinges my very nature ! Yet I
“ must, I will try to proceed !

“ THIS most miserable journey hap-
“ pened in the winter, and at a time
“ when the waters were swoln by
“ heavy falls of rain.— Within
“ ten miles of the *Grove*, we were
“ obliged to cross a small rivulet,
“ which emptied itself into a large ri-
“ ver ; and just as we had entered it,
“ the horses taking fright turned the
“ contrary way, carrying us in an in-
“ stant down the horrid current. What
“ a dreadful moment ! Oh my dear
“ wife ! thy shrieks, my infant's screams
“ still vibrate on my ear ! But the
“ cruel water bereft you of your
“ voices !

“ FROM

“ FROM the instant I perceived our
“ danger, my senses became stupified.
“ Unluckily for me, by some unfore-
“ seen means the door of our sinking
“ carriage burst open, by which ac-
“ cident my life was preserved. I was
“ driven on the shore, from whence
“ I was taken up and carried to a
“ poor cottage, where the humanity of
“ its inhabitants preserved a life which
“ has been from that hour wretched.

“ SOON as I could speak, without
“ any recollection of what had hap-
“ pened, I asked for my wife and
“ child: but this happy insensibility
“ did not last long; the words
“ were scarce passed my lips when the
“ door opened, and a number of peo-
“ ple crowded in, some of whom bore
“ their breathless bodies.

THE HERMIT.

“ REASON could not be expected to
“ keep her seat after so dreadful a
“ shock ; she kindly took her flight,
“ and in her absence I was unac-
“ quainted with my extreme misery.”

“ THE people at whose house I was,
“ finding by a letter in my pocket to
“ what family I belonged, sent an
“ account to my brother ; for my
“ dear father was by this time num-
“ bered amongst the blessed.”

“ My brother, too much engaged
“ in settling his affairs to come in per-
“ son, sent his steward, a worthy
“ good man, to whose care and the
“ skill of an excellent physician I owe
“ the recovery of my senses, after
“ they had deserted me near three
“ weeks.

“ IN

“ IN the beginning of my delirium
“ I could not be torn from my life-
“ less *Emilia* and her sweet child, to
“ whom I talked as if they were still-
“ living.

“ MR *Bending*’s first care was to get
“ these melancholy objects removed to
“ our family-vault; and in a month,
“ though still extremely weak, my
“ physician permitted me to be re-
“ moved to the *Grove*, where I was
“ received with every mark of affec-
“ tion by my brother and sister, both
“ of whom had often been to visit me
“ at the cottage.

“ WHATEVER tenderness my bro-
“ ther assumed on this occasion, time
“ and experience has since convinced
“ me was but an appearance, though
“ it then helped to support me under

“ my misfortunes.—His wife, the
“ most amiable of women, was calcu-
“ lated to drive melancholy from every
“ breast where it had not taken a too
“ deep root; but as that was the case
“ with me, all her kind affiduities
“ were bestowed in vain.

“ I TOOK no sort of satisfaction in
“ any thing I saw or heard; all was
“ alike indifferent. My mind, though
“ it had attained something that resem-
“ bled a calm, nevertheless felt inani-
“ mate: the nearest similitude I can
“ draw of myself is, a wretch besotted
“ with liquor, who sees and hears his
“ companions, but is disabled from at-
“ tending to their conversation, or
“ joining in it.

“ IF I could be said to take any de-
“ gree of satisfaction, it was in the
“ company

THE HERMIT.

11

“ company of my nephew, then about
“ eight years old : his innocent prat-
“ tle would oft remind me of my *Ed-*
“ *ward*, to whom I was now impa-
“ patient to return; but was obliged to
“ defer my journey longer, as there
“ were yet affairs to be settled, in
“ which my presence would be ne-
“ cessary.

“ DURING my residence at the *Grove*
“ I discovered this retreat: its gloomy
“ aspect pleased me. I could even at
“ that time have spent the remainder
“ of my days in it, had not the
“ thoughts of my dear boy forbade the
“ design, and shewed me on his ac-
“ count the necessity I was under of
“ returning to the world.

“ IN the evening, when I came
“ back to the *Grove*, I was just about

“ to recount to my brother what had
“ detained me so long, having spent
“ the whole day in viewing over this
“ subterraneous cavern, which I could
“ then do without the assistance of
“ candles, as the door by which we
“ entered, as well as that by which we
“ left it, was a contrivance of my own,
“ to make it the more concealed. But
“ I break the thread of my narrative—
“ I said I was going to describe this
“ rock to my brother, when I was
“ prevented by a letter delivered at that
“ instant.

“ THE alteration of my countenance,
“ as I read it, made my brother ask if
“ it contained any ill news.—I ought
“ not (I replied) to think any thing
“ a misfortune, after those dreadful
“ ones I have lately experienced. Alas !
“ I do not feel for myself, indeed I
“ do

" do not; but O my child! my dear
" child! how will thy tender years
" be able to struggle with adversity!
" to be debarred, perhaps, the very
" necessaries of life, or, what is still
" worse, obliged for them to depend
" on the smiles of the Great."

" A HINT of poverty drove every
" trace of regard from the face of my
" unkind brother. In the place of
" smiles and complacency, how cold,
" how icy the countenance he now
" assumed! Yet scarcely able to cre-
" dit what I said, he asked me why I
" talked in that unaccountable strain.
" Have you not (cried he) large sums
" in the Bank, besides your stock in
" trade? Why, then, talk of depen-
" dance for your child?"

" A WEEK

“ A WEEK since (answered I) it was
“ as you say ; but my partner, who till
“ now has ever bore the most honour-
“ able character, throws aside the
“ mask : he has not only drawn out
“ all my monies, but called up many
“ of my debts, with which booty he
“ has left the kingdom.”

“ DRAWN out your money ! (cried
“ he with redoubled emotions of dis-
“ appointment and surprise) how is
“ that possible ?”

“ It was very possible (returned I).
“ Thinking him honest, I put the
“ weapon into his hand, with which
“ he has stabbed me :—I left him in
“ my absence a power to manage even
“ my private fortune.”

“ THEN

" THEN I suppose, Sir (replied he, " coldly), you are not to blame in " this fine affair? Who but you would " have trusted to appearances? My " advice was never asked; so you can- " not expect, Sir, I will involve my- " self in your mismanaged affairs.— " Yet, if it will be of any real ser- " vice, I am not against advancing the " five thousand pounds left you by my " father, though it is three months " before you can otherwise demand " it."

HERE I must beg leave to take my readers' attention one moment from the narrative, to acquaint them Mr. *Harry Gore* had left the room whilst the old gentleman was recounting the melancholy death of his wife. This he did to relieve his heart by a few friendly drops, and to avoid hearing
" the

the unbrotherly treatment his uncle experienced from a man whose memory he could not but revere, having ever shewn himself a very indulgent parent. I know this interruption extremely *mal-à-propos*; for which reason I return to the Hermit's continuation of his affecting story.

“ THE indignation (said he) which
“ I felt at this conversation is not to
“ be expressed. I could hardly be-
“ lieve such cutting taunts, such cruel
“ reflections, could come from a bro-
“ ther whose love I never doubted. I
“ looked at him as if I would have
“ pierced his soul. I replied, “ Doubt-
“ less my misfortunes are sent me for
“ wife ends; nay, I am convinced
“ they are (added I): For had my
“ wife lived, I should have thought
“ with pain of quitting a world where

“ I

“ I enjoyed such happiness. The loss
“ of fortune shews me people in a true
“ light: Poverty is a touchstone to
“ friendship.”

“ THIS touched his conscious bo-
“ som; and he returned, with a look
“ of more rage than I can describe,
“ You moralize, Sir, extremely well;
“ though your last expression might
“ have been spared. You have yet
“ lost no friend; at least, I think I
“ have shewn myself one in the offer
“ I have just made you: But as to
“ any farther involvements, take it
“ how you please, brother, I will
“ avoid them.”

“ Not to be warm on that ac-
“ count, Sir (replied I), before Heaven
“ I now protest, you are the last man
“ I will apply to.”

“ My

“ My sister coming into the room
“ prevented his answer ; and when I
“ told her I should set out for *London*
“ early the next morning, she ap-
“ peared surprized ; but as her hus-
“ band did not ask me to put off my
“ journey, she supposed that particu-
“ lar affairs required my presence, and
“ only expressed her concern at my
“ leaving them.

“ THE following day I left the
“ *Grove* ; and that same evening had
“ the inexpressible pleasure to embrace
“ my sweet *Edward*, whose innocent
“ caresses made me forget half my
“ sufferings.

“ WHEN I came to look into my
“ affairs, I found them not quite so
“ bad as I expected ; and the five
“ thousand pounds, which I would not
“ receive

“ receive till it became due, set me
“ once more in a flourishing way.

“ At the end of ten years I found
“ myself possessed of twenty thousand
“ pounds. Though not in the least
“ adequate to my former fortune, yet
“ it made me happy, as it was very
“ sufficient to place my dear son
“ above dependance; a state I always
“ dreaded.

“ I now resolved to retire from
“ business, and only waited the arri-
“ val of the *West-India* fleet, from
“ which I had great dependance, to
“ put my design in execution: But
“ here I again met with a new mis-
“ fortune; the ships which I expected
“ were all lost in their passage.

“ My

“ My creditors judging I could not
“ support this second blow, took out
“ against me a statute of bankruptcy.
“ My dear *Edward*, now fifteen,
“ shewed on this occasion a heroism
“ far above his years: He never once
“ repined; on the contrary, declared
“ he felt no uneasy thought but for
“ his father. “ You have educated
“ me (said this best of children) in a
“ manner which will entitle me at
“ least to a genteel provision. Be-
“ sides, have you not often told me,
“ God will never forsake those who
“ believe and rely on him? Why
“ then, my dearest Sir, would you
“ think he will abandon us?”

“ I do not, my Love (I replied);
“ he will, doubtless, protect thy inno-
“ cence; and in thee I shall be re-
“ warded for all my sufferings.”

“ AFTER

“ AFTER two months. my affairs
“ being settled, I regained my liberty;
“ and my creditors, finding I had act-
“ ed with the strictest honour, many
“ of them offered to assist me, if I
“ again would enter into trade: But
“ this I declined, resolving no more to
“ trust the property of others in a bark
“ which Fortune shewed a settled re-
“ solution to destroy.

“ EDWARD often wondered that
“ his uncle had never offered me his
“ assistance, and strenuously desired I
“ would either write, or permit him
“ to go in person; but I absolutely re-
“ fused both, telling my son, that,
“ after his uncle’s former usage, and a
“ neglect of so many years, I could
“ not think of putting it a second time
“ in his power to insult me.

“ Not-

“ NOTWITHSTANDING all I said,
“ he was determined on one trial,
“ and set out unknown to me; pre-
“ tending he was going to visit a
“ Mr. Elliott, who was his school-
“ fellow.

“ KNOWING he had a great esteem
“ for this young gentleman, it gave
“ me pleasure to part with him: But
“ instead of going to *Reading*, he pro-
“ ceeded immediately to the *Grove*.
“ But oh, my God! how was his du-
“ tiful heart torn by the reception he
“ there met! Cold as winter’s frost
“ was this cruel brother to my sweet
“ blossom, scarcely hearing him with
“ common civility, absolutely refusing
“ to assist me. “ I suppose, young
“ man (said he, with a sneer), your
“ father did not acquaint you with the
“ reso-

"resolution he formerly made, that I
"should be the last person to whom
"he would apply?"

"My son, with resentment that
"spoke more in his eyes than words,
"said, "You are right, Sir; my father
"is ignorant of the step I have now
"taken. He too well knew your dis-
"position to think it would be of effi-
"cacy; but my inexperience in life
"made me scarcely credit that a Chris-
"tian, bound by every tie, divine or
"human, could see a brother, that
"brother so deserving, even in the
"jaws of ruin, and not reach out his
"hand to save him. But my credu-
"lity is cured; you have shewn me
"there are such men. Adieu, Sir (to
"my brother). This is the last time
"you shall be troubled with the sight
"of

“ of me.” Saying which, he hurried
“ to the door ; nor did his uncle at-
“ tempt to detain him.

C H A P. XVI.

“ EDWARD, on his return to
“ *London*, could not conceal
“ the chagrin he felt at this cruel and
“ inhospitable treatment ; and, after
“ many importunities, I wrung the se-
“ cret from him.

“ THOUGH this fresh instance of
“ my brother’s unkindness gave me a
“ severe pang, yet to my son I made
“ light of it, unwilling to add any
“ concern of mine to what he already
“ suffered.

“ HE

“ He was now the only comfort I
“ had left; of every other I was be-
“ reft; yet still in him rich beyond
“ my hopes. Such sense, such wis-
“ dom, duty so exemplary! But then
“ to lose him! Oh, it was too, too
“ much! Yet let not a man, a liv-
“ ing man complain: Rather let me
“ say with Job, *The Lord gave, and the*
“ *Lord taketh away, and blessed be the*
“ *name of the Lord!*”

THIS ejaculation he pronounced with streaming eyes, uplifted to Heaven. As for his fair auditors, it might have been thought their tears flowed from exhaustless fountains. But as I doubt not many of my gentle readers are blessed with hearts equally susceptible, I shall not take upon me to describe the tender sensations of such

minds as can feel for the woes of others. As for those of a different complexion, it is impossible that even a *Shakespeare's* pen, or the pencil of a *Raphael*, should give them any conception of the sympathetic sorrow which filled the breasts of *Maria* and *Lavinia*.

“ I HAD still (continued Mr. *Gore*)
“ one friend left, and not a summer
“ one, that leaves us as soon as
“ bleak wind blow. This gentle-
“ man [had in my affluence] been
“ perfectly obliging, but never shewed
“ me any particular tenderness, till I
“ thought myself forsaken by the
“ world. It was then he flew to me,
“ and held out the balsam of friend-
“ ship: By him we were supported in
“ our blasted fortunes; my dear Ed-
“ ward

"ward looked on him as a second fa-
ther, I as my preserving angel."

"ONE morning he came to us with
a countenance more than usually
delighted, and shaking me cordi-
ally by the hand, he took that of
my son *Edward*, saying with a
smile, "I want to petition your
father on an affair in which you must
stand my advocate, or I shall be
apprehensive of not succeeding."

"WHAT an ungrateful creature do
you think me, my friend (replied
I)! Sure there is nothing within my
little power which you may not
freely command. Tell me, I in-
treat you, in what I can serve the
man on earth to whom I am most
obliged."

“ Not a word of obligations (cried
“ he), and I will satisfy you in what
“ manner you may infinitely please me.
“ But forbear to interupt me till I have
“ given reasons for what I am about
“ to ask.”

“ I YESTERDAY left you (pursued
“ he) in order to attend a meeting at
“ the *India-house*, when, without the
“ least expectation of that honour, I
“ was unanimously elected governor
“ of *Bengal*, and desired to get my-
“ self ready with all possible expedition
“ for my embarkation. Now it in-
“ stantly occurred to me that I would
“ solicit the company of my dear
“ *Edward*.”

“ I TURNED pale, started, and was
“ going to interrupt him; but he
“ prevented me by humorously put-
“ ting

“ ting his hand before my mouth. “ I
“ must, I see (said he), remind you of
“ your promise: I have not yet done.
“ I know what I ask will, at first,
“ give you pain; but on reflection you
“ will find, that by going with me,
“ he cannot fail of returning in a few
“ years possessed of a fortune to shine
“ in that sphere to which his birth,
“ sense, and fine accomplishments en-
“ title him.”

“ EDWARD’s face was vermillioned
“ to hear those praises, though justly
“ bestowed upon him.

“ WELL, (said our friend) I have
“ but one thing more to add: You
“ know I am now a bachelor, and if
“ I hold in my present mind shall pro-
“ bably continue one; but this I do
“ not positively say will be the case.

“ Yet, supposing it so, I shall look on
“ *Edward* as my son; and as such pro-
“ vide for him at my death.—Now
“ for this reason I think it will be for his
“ interest to be with me as much as
“ possible, in order to beat back *Cu-*
“ *pid*, should he see him making any
“ advances towards me.—What say
“ you, my boy? Will you undertake
“ to guard my heart from those pretty
“ adventuresses who will, no doubt,
“ try all their arts to entrap it?”

“ THOUGH I could perceive joy
“ dancing in the eyes of my *Edward*
“ at this proposal, yet he modestly
“ declined giving his answer till I had
“ declared my sentiments.

“ NOTWITHSTANDING the thoughts
“ of a separation were almost dreadful
“ to me as death itself, yet could I
“ object

" object to what appeared so much
" for his advantage? How selfish to
" have detained him!—Would his
" engaging company compensate for
" those reflections I must have felt
" from an ill-timed fondness, which
" had debarred him the opportunity
" of raising a fortune adequate to his
" merit?

" REFLECTIONS such as these de-
" termined me, suffer what I would,
" not to oppose the generous intentions
" of my friend; and if I did not in
" reality consent with chearfulness,
" yet I tried at its appearance.

" THIS ready acquiescence filled his
" honest heart with rapture: he
" embraced first me, then my son,
" and declared a thousand times it

" should be his only study to make us
" happy.

" ALAS ! my dear *Edward* ! thy
" grateful acknowledgements to our
" benefactor, thy tender manly sor-
" row at leaving me, I never, never
" shall forget.

" BEFORE their departure my friend
" put a paper into the hands of my
" son, desiring it might not be opened
" in his presence. When he left us,
" how were we overwhelmed by fresh
" acts of generosity ! Enclosed were
" two letters; one to *Edward*, begging
" his acceptance of three hundred
" pounds, as I might be unadvised
" of (he said) the numberless things
" necessary for so long a voyage.

" THAT

“ THAT directed to me appeared a
“ large packet, which on opening I
“ found contained a sheet of parch-
“ ment, together with the following
“ note:

“ OFTEN have you told me you
“ wanted some way in which to oblige
“ me: I have now thought of a me-
“ thod.—If you accept the enclosed,
“ you lay me under infinite obliga-
“ tions:—on the contrary, should you
“ return it, I shall for the future
“ look on you as a person who refuses
“ to gratify the warmest wish of my
“ heart.—I intend sleeping with you
“ to-night, when you will fix by your
“ determination in this affair either
“ the friendship or disapprobation of
“ Your now affectionate, &c.”

“ OH my dear Ladies! what think
“ you it was he forced so strenuously
“ on my acceptance? No less than an
“ annuity of two hundred pounds.—
“ The pain I felt at being loaded with
“ such immense favours, was some-
“ what lessened by the pleasure it gave
“ my *Edward* to think that I should
“ not be left destitute.

“ To shorten my narrative, I can
“ only say I accepted this new obliga-
“ tion, which I found it impossible
“ to refuse, but at the expence of
“ that friendship I so highly estimated;
“ and parted from my dearest child
“ and his kind protector with more re-
“ solution than I ever believed myself
“ master of.

“ DURING two years, I constantly
“ heard from my son, whose letters
“ were

“ were filled with prayers for my
“ health, and in repeating acts of ten-
“ derness from our best friend.

“ Ah my children! I can proceed
“ no farther! Take this (drawing a
“ letter from his pocket): I received
“ it the third year after he left *Eng-*
“ *land*. Wo is me! I cannot read it!
“ A parent’s grief obstructs my sight;
“ I will retire, and indulge the effu-
“ sions of my sorrow.”

SEEING him quit the room with precipitation, “ My God! said *Maria*: how I tremble for the fate of this deserving youth! How I pity his forlorn parent! Why did he consent to his leaving *England*? But let us examine the letter he has left. May there not be a gleam of hope that he is yet living?

“ OH no ! (cried she, after they
“ had eagerly thrown their eyes over
“ its contents) oh no ! there is not
“ the least shadow of hope ! Every
“ flattering idea of that nature here
“ vanishes ! Cruel, unpitying Elements !
“ Was it necessary for you to com-
“ bine in the ruin of this accomplished
“ youth, and to render miserable a
“ poor old man, who had before
“ tasted too deeply of Misfortune’s cup ?
“ By Water he already has lost a be-
“ loved wife and child : could not the
“ unrelenting Fire have spared the
“ only remaining prop of his declin-
“ ing age ? ”

To account for this tender sor-
row, which sprung spontaneous
from the tender heart of Miss Coven-
try, I shall here oblige my readers
with a sight of the dreadful letter

Mr.

Mr. Gore left for their perusal, which it seems came from the friend who had kindly, but very unfortunately, carried his son from *England*.

LETTER.

“ AH my friend! what can I say!
“ how administer comfort, who am
“ myself destitute of comfort? But if
“ my feelings are so great, what must
“ be those of a fond unhappy parent!
“ I now behold my folly in taking
“ your treasure from you; I see it too
“ late! Guess the horrid catastrophe.—
“ If you do not, I fear I can never pre-
“ vail on my trembling pen to tell it
“ you. Yet, my good old friend,
“ you must know it! there is a cruel
“ necessity that you should.—Let me
“ then, as a punishment, take on my-
“ self the melancholy task of relating
it;

“ it ; for had it not been for me, your
“ beloved and deserving child might
“ have been perhaps at this very mo-
“ ment sitting by your side.

“ I SAID I would recount ;—but
“ where am I to begin ? Had I been
“ to write to you a week since, I
“ could with justness have told you,
“ that your dear *Edward* and myself
“ were as happy as it was possible for
“ two people to be, who were so dis-
“ tant from their friends and native
“ land : But how, in that short space,
“ nay, in three days, sadly reversed !

“ OUR dear boy, for I fondly used
“ to call him mine, had made an en-
“ gagement with some young gentle-
“ men to go by water, on a party of
“ pleasure, about three leagues. They
“ were to return the next day ; but at
“ twelve

"twelve that same night I was almost
"rendered speechless with grief, by a
"messenger who ran to inform me,
"the vessel in which my *Edward*
"went had by some accident taken
"fire, and that it was impossible to
"send them any assistance, the wind
"blowing fresh from the shore..

"As soon as this shocking account
"reached me, I hastened to the place
"where I was told this dreadful con-
"flagration was yet to be seen.

"HERE I drop the curtain: Happy
"should I have been to say one single
"life was saved; that life our *Ed-*
"*ward's*. But alas! they all shared
"the same fate; every creature pe-
"rished.

"AND

“ AND now, my dear miserable friend, what can I add? You are not at this hour, after undergoing such various and severe trials, to be told on whom you are to rely. Advice of this kind would be impertinent, as well as unnecessary. I shall only, therefore, recommend you to that Power who can, when he pleases, turn all our sorrows into joy. Farewell, my dear friend; the ship by which I send this is now under sail. May Heaven give you comfort!”

Lavinia and Miss *Coventry* had been weeping over this epistle, when Mr. *Gore* and his nephew re-entered together. *Maria* met them at the door. The former held out his hand: “ My dear child (said he), your eyes, as well

“ well as those of the tender-hearted
“ Miss *Gilford*, shew how they have
“ been employed. Can I forgive my-
“ self for distressing you as I have
“ done ? ”

Miss *Coventry* involuntarily pressed
the shrivelled hand which contained
hers to her lips. “ My dearest father
“ (replied she), you must allow me a
“ few tears for the loss of my amiable
“ brother. How severe have been
“ your afflictions ! Yet you are hap-
“ pier still than thousands : a con-
“ science such as you are possessed
“ of is a continual source of satis-
“ faction.”

“ BUT methinks, Sir, (added Miss
“ *Gilford*, taking his other hand) it is
“ wrong to exclude yourself so en-
“ tirely

"tirely from society. Sorrow sinks
"deepest in the mind when it is
"nursed in solitude. Company might
"have chased away many gloomy re-
"flections, whilst in this place they
"must receive addition."

"I CANNOT (replied Mr. Harry
"Gore) avoid dissenting from the opi-
"nion of my *Lavinia*; for after the
"shock I received from her supposed
"falshood, nothing was so tedious as
"being obliged to pass a day even
"with my most intimate friends; and
"I can truly say, if I ever tasted the
"least satisfaction, it was in retire-
"ment." "no. 162."

"This you alledge, I suppose, Sir
"(said Miss Coventry), that you may
"be set down in the list of constant
"lovers;

“ lovers ; but should that be the case,
“ I fancy you would meet with few
“ names before your own.”

“ How hardly you think of our
“ sex, Madam (replied he). May not
“ that fickleness, of which I confess
“ we give but too many instances, be
“ sometimes owing to your own in-
“ constancy ?”

“ UPON my honour (returned she),
“ I can only answer your question in
“ the words of Mr. Addison, “ Much
“ may be said on both sides.”

“ LORD bless me (cried *Lavinia*) ! it
“ is almost dark, and Mr. *Coventry*
“ will be again concerned at our stay.
“ Pray drop your contention, good
“ people ; and, as we walk to our
“ car-

" carriage, let us jointly request our
" revered guide to finish his recital."

THE good man promised to comply; and neither of the gentlemen pressing them to stay longer, on account of the reason given by Miss *Gilford* for their return to *Weatly*, they proceeded through the wood by slow steps, listening to Mr. *Gore*, who in this manner concluded his history,



C H A P. XVII.

“ AFTER the letter you have just
“ read, you will not be sur-
“ prised at the resolution I took to re-
“ tire from a world where I had expe-
“ rienced for many years nothing but
“ misfortunes.

“ THE cave which I had formerly
“ seen in this wood again presented it-
“ self to my remembrance, and im-
“ mediately I resolved to make it the
“ place of my retreat, unknowing and
“ unknown. I was obliged to ac-
“ quaint two people of my design:
“ These were the honest couple you
“ have seen at my little habitation.

“ They

“ They had lived with me for twenty
“ years ; and their love and fidelity
“ cannot be better expressed than in
“ the resolution they took to accom-
“ pany me hither.

“ ONE thing perplexed me greatly :
“ I wanted to be thought dead by the
“ world, particularly by my friend,
“ from whose bounty I enjoyed an in-
“ come for which I had now no use,
“ and which I knew it was impossible
“ for me to decline, till he should be
“ assured of my death.

“ How to assure him of it, and re-
“ store his generous favours, was my
“ only care ; and having well consi-
“ dered this matter, I dispatched
“ *Simon* with a note to each printer
“ of the daily papers, to signify my
“ death.

“ AFTER

“ AFTER this necessary caution, my
“ next step was to get, by the assist-
“ ance of my two faithful domesticks,
“ the few conveniences with which I
“ am here surrounded. *Simon* went
“ often abroad, and heard my fate la-
“ mented every where; no one be-
“ lieved me living, and my unkind
“ brother outwardly mourned for me;
“ whilst my dear nephew, I was in-
“ formed, suffered real sorrow.”

“ INDEED, Sir, I did (interrupted
“ that young gentleman), and never
“ can I forgive myself—”

“ HOLD! (cried his uncle) I know
“ what you would say, my child:
“ Was it your fault that I had not be-
“ fore received the tender offices of
“ your dutiful affectionate heart? No:
“ the commands of your father obliged
“ you

“ you to restrain those warm sentiments
“ of love you entertained for me ; sen-
“ timents which those of my own *Ed-*
“ *ward* hardly exceeded.”

“ OH how good, how very kind,
“ are you, my dear Sir (returned he) !
“ Had my mother lived—But you
“ know I lost her in what may be called
“ my infant state. Had she lived, ho-
“ nouring your virtues as I know she
“ honoured them, I might have sooner
“ been permitted to pay you that du-
“ tiful attendance which your good-
“ ness, your piety, your fortitude de-
“ manded.”

“ ENOUGH, enough, my son (said
“ the good man). Say no more;
“ you soften me too much ! I shall not
“ be able to proceed with the little
“ which remains to be told. It is only
“ this,

" this, Ladies: That as soon as my
" brother paid the debt of nature, I
" caused my being alive, with the place
" of my concealment, to be revealed
" by *Simon* to my nephew, who flew
" immediately to my expecting arms.
" After the first tumults of his tran-
" sport were somewhat abated, he
" used every argument his tenderness
" could suggest to make me quit my
" Cave, and to go back with him to
" the *Grove*, where he kindly said
" I should be intire master.

" SEEING he could not prevail, he
" caused that house to be built which
" you have just quitted; and to quiet
" his fears for my health, I promised
" to retire every night to this more
" wholesome dwelling. And now, my
" dear children, I have opened to you
" the whole scene of my distresses, I

"intreat, on my blessing, you will not
"let them affect your minds with me—
"lancholy.—Happier days may yet
"await me! If I ever hear the hands
"of my *Harry* and his amiable
"*Lavinia* are united, I think I may
"promise you I shall again taste of
"joy."

I SHALL not repeat what farther passed on this occasion: delight, gratitude, and reverence, filled every breast. Their separation was necessary, but painful. Another visit was promised by the ladies. Their servants and carriage were now in view: they parted at the verge of the wood; the gentlemen returning to their cell, and the ladies to their chariot.

LAVINIA

THE HERMIT. 51

LAVINIA being set down at the *Grange*, asked a servant what company was in the house, hearing voices in the dining-parlour.

"Sir *William More*, Madam, (replied he) Mr. *Perigreen*, and Mr. *Jones*, dined with my master."

FLUTTERED at the very name of Sir *William*, she asked for Lady *Gilford*; and being told she was in her dressing-room, ascended the stairs, ordering the fellow not to tell Sir *Francis* she was come back.

HER mother, with a countenance not the most pleasing, asked *Lavinia* the reason why she had not returned the last night. "Miss *Coventry*'s company (said her Ladyship) is doubtless very agreeable; yet she ought not, I

D 2 think,

“ think, *Levy*, to engross so much of
“ yours. Here has been Sir *William*
“ *More* twice to see you, and great-
“ ly disappointed to find you not at
“ home.

“ I THOUGHT, my dear Madam,
“ (replied Miss *Gilford*) you would
“ have spared me from the pain of
“ again declaring I had rather die than
“ be the wife of that man. Reflect
“ on his vile artifice.”

“ I DO reflect on that affair,” cried
her Ladyship with a voice in which an-
ger was predominate; “ I reflect on it
“ with shame, that a daughter of mine
“ should be capable of a contrivance so
“ low to bribe a servant. What mean-
“ nefs!—

“ AND

" AND can you really, can my mo-
" ther believe me a wretch even more
" despicable than Sir *William*? Can
" she suppose me guilty of so dishonour-
" able a subterfuge?"

" WHAT reason have I to acquit
" you?—Did not *James* overhear you
" offer the girl a hundred pounds to
" fasten the lye upon us?—Have I not
" discharged the creature? Has not Sir
" *William More* by the most solemn
" assertions convinced me of his inno-
" cence?"

" So you are determined, Madam,
" to believe this vile agent, and his
" still viler employer, before a daugh-
" ter who has never forfeited her duty
" or her Word."

“ CHILD, child, (in a tone of increasing displeasure) we know your unaccountable aversion to this match.”

“ WILL nothing, Madam, convince you of my innocence? But suppose, after all his solemn assertions, you should hear Sir *William* confess the truth of *Sally's* information?”

“ WAS he to do that indeed, I should think of him as he deserves.”

“ IT shall be so, said *Lavinia*,” for a moment lost in thought.

“ WHAT?” asked her mother.

“ FIRST promise me, Madam, that if he owns himself author of this black affair, you will never more command

“ mand me to receive his very hateful
“ visits.”

“ I MAY venture to make you
“ such a promise, on the terms you
“ mention.”

“ Two things more I must request :
“ one, that your Ladyship will not
“ acquaint my brother with what has
“ now passed between us : the other,
“ that you will engage Sir *William* for
“ to-morrow afternoon, when I pro-
“ mise to be present, and hope to satisfy
“ your Ladyship of my innocence and
“ his baseness.”

“ I COMPLY with this too, *Levy*; but
“ in return expect, if the guilt, instead
“ of falling on him should rest on your-
“ self, I shall no longer find you re-
“ fractory.”

SIR *Francis* coming into the room at this instant, prevented an answer to her last sentence, not at all unseasonable for *Lavinia*.

THE Baronet being half-seas-over, told his sister he came with a petition from Sir *William*, who had seen her enter the house, that she would permit him to attend her in the breakfast-parlour, where he waited for that favour.

“ WAITING for me! (cried *Lavinia*, her eyes expressing indignation) the man is surely possessed! Did I ever yet consent to see him, without it was by the absolute commands of my mother? and then did he not know my reluctance to obey? How, after this, can he desire me to come “ to

“ to him, as if I would oblige him vo-
“ luntarily?”

“ YOUR dislike, *Levy*, (replied Sir
“ Francis) does not appear abated to
“ Sir *William*. I think (applying to
“ his mother) we must e'en let her
“ have her own way.”

“ AH now, indeed, (said the grate-
“ ful *Lavinia*) you are my kind bro-
“ ther!”

“ I HOPE (returned he in a whisper)
“ you have not forgot my interest with
“ Miss *Coventry*; for should she be as
“ cruel to me as you are to the gentle-
“ man below, depend on it, things
“ will not wear so pleasing a face: for
“ assure yourself, that you yet shall
“ be Lady *More*, if your friend does
“ not consent to be Lady *Gilford*.”

THE claret, of which Sir *Francis* had taken a sufficient quantity, stripped off that disguise he had hitherto assumed, and his sister found with inexpressible concern that it was as easy for an *Ethiopian* to change his skin, or a Leper his spots, as for Sir *Francis* to change his nature.—However, having great dependence on the next afternoon, she resolved to keep secret *Maria's* disapprobation of his addresses, and to repay art with art: therefore, instead of appearing in the least shocked, she replied with a smile, that if her marriage with Sir *William* depended on Miss *Coventry*, she was certain never to be honoured with the title of Lady *More*.

THOUGH a double *entendre*, he took the meaning of this ambiguous expression in the manner he wished it; which

which put him in such high good-humour; that he swore he would go that instant to Sir *William*, to let him know his visits would no longer be agreeable to the family.

HE was actually going on this errand, when Lady *Gilford* called him back, and desired nothing might be done in this affair till the next afternoon; and requested her son to engage him to give them his company at that time, for some particular reasons.

"But what, Madam, says *Lavinia*?"

"I HAVE no objection, brother,
provided it is his last visit."

SIR *Francis* with an oath confirmed it should, and left the room, going immediately to the breakfast-parlour, where he found Sir *William*, who was informed he could not prevail on his sister to come down that night.

THE Baronet politely termed her a d—n--d pretty prude; an appellation for which he made no sort of apology to her brother; nor, indeed, did he seem to expect any.—After telling his friend Lady *Gilford's* desire of seeing him the next afternoon, they went back to their company, where the bottle soon made Sir *William* forget the unkindness of his mistress.

LAVINIA, when she left her mother's apartment and retired to her own, began and finished a long letter to Mr. *Harry Gore*, the contents of which

which never came to my knowledge: only this I can inform my readers, that it was sent to the *Grove* by a person in whom she could confide, early the next morning; and that the answer she received from her lover filled her eyes with additional lustre.

I SHALL pass over many hours to hasten that time forward, which was to produce Sir *William* his last interview with Miss *Gilford*, who that afternoon sparkled in all the ornament of dress.

SIR *Francis* flattering himself that *Lavinia* had the preceding night given him hopes Miss *Coventry* was not averse to his addresses, put on an air of good-humour, and eyeing her with a smile, “ Upon my soul, *Levy*, (said “ he) I am not surprised at Sir *William*’s
“ passion.

“ passion. Such a girl is worth some
“ pains, by G—. I did not think till
“ now you was half so handsome!
“ Yet how cruel to put on all these
“ killing charms, when you are re-
“ solved not to heal the wound you
“ have given!”

“ I EXPECT other company than
“ Sir *William* (replied *Lavinia*): I
“ have sent to desire Mr. *Coventry*,
“ *Maria*, and the good Doctor will
“ drink tea with us.—Bless me! they
“ are come! I see their servant this
“ moment entering the house.”

SIR *Francis* flew to assist them from
their carriage; but returned instantly
with a disappointed countenance.

“ DEVILISH unlucky, Sister! they
“ are prevented, it seems. *Dick* tells
“ me

" me there are four gentlemen and
" two ladies just come from *London*.
" But here is a billet for you."

Miss *Gilford* took the note, broke
the seal, ran her eye over it, then gave
it to her brother, saying, " Only an
" apology : they are kept from us by
" the arrival of Lord and Lady *L—*,
" and some of their friends."

" CURSE their friends ! But what
" other gentlemen ? Three, it seems.
" Confound them ! "

" I HEARD but of one ; and that one
" a ward of his Lordship's.

" YOUNG, handsome, and rich, no
" doubt. Hell catch him ! I shall
" stand a fine chance. But tell me,
" *Levy*—".

HE

HE was going to proceed, when the appearance of Sir *William More* put a stop to his question ; which, as it concerned the hint she had given the last evening, might have puzzled her to answer.

NOTWITHSTANDING *Lavinia* knew what mortifications were preparing for Sir *William*, his presence disconcerted her to such a degree, that she could hardly arise at his entrance.

THERE is something in guilt which cannot be concealed. The sight of the person injured, like *Ithuriel's* spear, brings it to light, though hidden in the bottom of the heart. The livid pale, the conscious blush, the hesitating accent, are so many witnesses to condemn the injurer.

SIR

SIR *William* was distinguished by each of those. Though naturally a bold, a forward man, the sight of Miss *Gilford* made him turn now pale, then red. He would have spoke: “ Ma-“ dam (he did say), to be sure you, “ you, you have heard—” He stopt here.

“ Pox take it (cried Sir *Francis*) !
“ what a fool does this Love make
“ thee !”

“ You mistake, brother (said *Lavinia*) ; Sir *William*’s confusion arises
“ from another motive than Love. I
“ think, Sir (turning to him, with an
“ air of irony), this is the first oppor-
“ tunity I have had to ask your pardon
“ for the vile means I made use of to
“ fully your unblemished character.”

LADY

LADY *Gilford* coming in just as this blow had almost levelled Sir *William* even with despair, her presence reassured him a little; and paying his respects to her Ladyship, he had the courage to tell *Lavinia*, that, "By Heaven, he was unconscious of her meaning."

" You are very good, Sir (replied she, in her former tone), not to understand me. I am sensible of your generosity: You would not cover me with confusion before my mother, before my brother, by upbraiding me with the bribe I gave my servant to traduce you."

" By the great God, Madam (rising in a passion), I never said you had bribed the wench; I only declared my

“my own innocence; and here again
“I protest by all—”

“STOP, Sir (interrupted Miss Gil-
“ford, with a sweet dignity); utter
“not the horrid perjury, at least till
“I bring one witness to prove your
“guilt.”

Miss *Gilford* receiving no reproof for this spirited behaviour, made Sir *William* see how matters stood; for which reason he determined to throw up the game; and what made him more fixed on this step was the lady's hint of a witness. *James*, for interested considerations, would not, he very well knew, betray him.

Who, then, could be this dreaded evidence? Not Mr. *Gore*; no, it could not be him, after the convincing proofs
he

he supposed she had given of her love for another. Yet, on a second consideration, it was not impossible. There was even a probability that they might by some accident have come to an eclaircissement. A very thought of this nature worked so powerfully on his coward imagination, that he fancied he saw Mr. *Gore* at that instant with his sword drawn, breathing defiance and revenge; a suggestion which drove the dastard blood from his before crimsoned cheeks.

HAVING nothing to say in his defence, he scowled a look of disdain from under his bent brows; replying, with a tremendous oath, "Such usage was not to be borne; and never more would he trouble himself about a proud imperious woman."

THIS

THIS he said whilst he held the door in his hand.

LADY *Gilford* rising, darted a look of displeasure at her daughter, and was advancing to detain Sir *William*, when that gentleman's ears were saluted by a voice which threw him into an universal tremor. Though, to the delighted ones of *Lavinia*, harmony itself, the trembling Baronet mistook its music for the hoarse notes of a raven croaking out his final dissolution.

MR. *Gore*, for it was no other, flashing upon them with the dignity of conscious virtue, prevented his coward rival from passing the door ; and said, forcing him back,

“ EXCUSE

70 THE HERMIT.

" EXCUSE me, Sir, if I compel you
" to return. Sir *Francis*, Lady *Gil-*
" *ford*, and her charming daughter,
" if I was not to acknowledge the
" large debt I owe you, would un-
" doubtedly despise me, as a man
" without gratitude. May I hope
" your Ladyship, and you, Sir (grace-
" fully turning to Sir *Francis*), will
" pardon the liberty I am about to
" take, by asking this gentleman a few
" questions in your presence?"

THEY only bowed their heads:
They knew not what to answer, so
much were they astonished at the ap-
pearance of Mr. *Gore*, but more by
the manner in which he accosted Sir
William, and the visible guilt of that
unworthy incendiary.

LAVINIA

LAVINIA, by whom this last visitor was not unexpected, having sent that morning to contrive an interview from which she flattered herself with the most pleasing consequences, gave her lover, when she saw him force back Sir *William*, a look which spoke even more plain than words, and told him he should not carry matters too far; which reminded him of the promise he had made his uncle the preceding day; which intreated him, if he loved her, not to hazard his valuable life against the most despicable of God's creatures.

IN the same silent language he bad her not to be alarmed: he assured her, the known cowardice of his adversary would prevent every thing she feared.

“ Now,

“ Now, Sir,” cried Mr. *Gore*, indignation darting from his determined eye, whilst the delinquent vile seemed to shrink into himself, “ Now, Sir, I
“ am at your service. Though there
“ are, I know, to a generous person
“ few subjects more ungrateful than to
“ hear those praises they deserve, yet
“ with or without your leave, Sir *Wil-*
“ *liam*, I will, I must mention some
“ of the many favours you have be-
“ stowed on me; so many, I must
“ thank you for them too.”

“ SIR—Sir—I don’t know—I don’t
“ understand——”

“ You have convinced me that you
“ neither know or understand the laws
“ of honour, conscience, humanity.
“ What I now declare (continued Mr.
“ *Gore*, applying himself to Lady *Gil-*
“ *ford*

“*ford* and Sir *Francis*) may appear extremely unpolite; but politeness has no part to take in this affair. Your daughter, Madam, your sister, Sir, has been traduced, vilely traduced by this wretch, I will not call him man: he shall himself prove to you he deserves the appellation.

“ TAKE care, Sir, (said Sir *Francis* in an angry tone) take care! I will not suffer this in my house: Sir *William More* shall not be thus treated.”

“ PARDON me, Sir *Francis*, I came not here to have any altercation with the brother of Miss *Gilford*.”

“ PRAY, Brother, pray, Madam, (for Lady *Gilford* was going to say something) in defence of my ho-

“ nour, in defence of the honour of my
“ family, of my sex, permit Mr.
“ Gore to proceed.—This man (look-
“ ing disdainfully on Sir *William*)
“ has been too much listened to al-
“ ready.”

“ I THINK we must comply (said
“ her Ladyship), indeed, if Sir *Wil-*
“ *liam* has—”

“ PARDON me, Madam (inter-
“ rupted Mr. *Gore*) ; if I do not con-
“ vince you he has been the most de-
“ signing, the blackest of villains, ba-
“ nish me your presence ; call me, if
“ possible, a baser, a more subtle
“ villain than I now call Sir *Wil-*
“ *liam*.”

NOTHING but fear of offending his
sister, and destroying his interest with
Miss

Miss Coventry, could have restrained the fury of Sir *Francis*; whilst his friend turned a deaf ear to Mr. *Gore's* last threats, talking loudly and earnestly to Sir *Francis*, and attempting to defend himself; though, in fact, he was thrown into so terrible a fright, that he hardly knew what he said or did.

MR. *Gore* advancing towards him with a threatening countenance, his hand upon his sword, “ Answer me, “ Sir *William* (cried he), the questions “ I propose;—answer them without “ evasion.

“ DID you tell me Miss *Gilford*
“ every evening entertained a fa-
“ voured lover? Did you carry me to
“ the window, where you assured
“ me they met? Did you there sub-

“ Substitute *Sally* to personate her Lady?
“ Was I deceived by your arts to be-
“ lieve, against the evidence of my
“ heart, to believe I saw Miss *Gilford*
“ at the window entertaining a lover
“ unworthy of herself and family?—
“ Give me a true, give me an
“ immediate answer, or, coward
“ as thou art, thy life shall be the
“ forfeit.”

SIR *William*, who already fancied he saw the sword of his determined adversary drawn from its scabbard, looked now on this side—then on that—went to the window—threw it up—let it down again;—and though half dead with fear, attempted at a careless unconcerned air.

SEEING his irresolution, Mr. *Gore* again demanded an answer, or, if he longer

longer refused to give it, in the most determined manner insisted on his going with him to a proper place, where he would force it from him by another method than words.

SIR *William*, finding he had but one alternative, either to fight or own himself a rascal, did not long hesitate which to chuse: The former it could not be; his heart affirmed it; consoling himself, if he preferred the latter, his title and fortune would still command respect from a great part of mankind.

BEING once come to a final resolution, first getting as near the door as possible, he delivered the following eloquent harangue:

"DEVIL fetch me, Mr. *Gore*, if
"you are not a cursed unaccount-
"able person! I am not afraid, d'ye
"see; no, damme if I am! So far
"from repenting what I have done,
"I shall glory in telling you, that I
"did contrive a cursed clever revenge.
"Confound my stars, that it has not
"been more successful!" Saying which,
and the lock answering to his extended
hand, he made but one step to the ser-
vants hall, ordered the coachman to get
immediately on his box, bouncing in-
to his chariot, which carried or ra-
ther flew with him out of the court-
yard. But it is no more our intention
to pursue him, than it was Mr. *Gore's*:
for this reason we return to the draw-
ing-room, where we shall find the
hero who had drove not the lion, but
a much lower animal, happy beyond
his most sanguine expectations.

LADY

LADY *Gilford* and Sir *Francis* had already thanked him for bringing to light the hidden villainy of Sir *William*. “The vile man! How could they ever have supposed him guilty of such an action!” *Lavinia* was commanded by her mother, desired by her brother, to be grateful to Mr. *Gore*.

WHAT, at that moment, was the joy of both! It cannot be described! It must be left to the imagination of my readers.

SIR *Francis*, after tea, saying he had an engagement with Mr. *Jones*, took his leave; and a servant entering soon after, and delivering her Ladyship a letter, she likewise retired to read it.

THE lovers being left alone, expressed the almost inexpressible pleasure they felt at the charming prospects before them.

“ NOTHING now, my dearest *Lavinia*, (said Mr. Gore) will obstruct our happiness. Your mother, nay even your brother seems to favour my pretensions: I am full of the most pleasing hopes.”

“ NEITHER am I less happy, but rather less sanguine (replied Miss *Gilford* smiling). My brother at present is, indeed, very kind; but he has sinister views in this kindness. In them he must be disappointed; and if he should again become our enemy, we have nothing to hope from the favour of my mother.”

JUST as she had pronounced these words, Lady *Gilford* with a countenance of some concern and great business rushed into the room: "Child
" (said her Ladyship), we must set
" out this instant for your aunt *Grof-*
" *venor's.*

" I HOPE, Madam, my dear aunt
" is not ill."

" VERY ill, indeed! Poor, dear,
" good woman! her physician has
" pronounced she cannot live eight
" hours."

" BLESS me! how I am terrified!
" Who brought your Ladyship this
" intelligence?" said *Lavinia*.

" THE letter I just now received:
" it came by an express.—*Stephens*

“ wrote it.—She says her Lady is
“ very ill, very ill, indeed.—Alas !
“ my poor dear sister ! she has a large
“ fortune to bequeath.—Lord help
“ me ! how unlucky Sir *Francis* is not
“ in the house ! I have sent a messen-
“ ger.—I hope he is not gone far ; I
“ hope he will be met with at Mr.
“ *Jones*’s.—A sad stroke, Mr. *Gore* !
“ Just turned of fifty !—My sister is
“ no more !”

HERE the messenger she had dis-
patched for Sir *Francis* returned to
tell her Ladyship, he could not be
found.

“ WELL, (cried she) it is very un-
“ fortunate ; but we must go without
“ him ; there is no time to be lost :
“ it is forty miles to *Millbridge*. Is
“ the

“ the coach ready? Order it to the
“ door instantly.”

THE servant bowed, and dis-
appeared.

MR. Gore desired the honour to escort them; which being granted, after handing the Ladies to their carriage, he stepped in himself, and, seated opposite to his *Lavinia*, the six hours they were on the road seemed but as one moment.

HER Ladyship being thoughtful, he had an opportunity of entertaining his fair mistress without restraint.

ON their arrival at *Millbridge*, they were met by Mrs. Stephens, who told

E 6 Lady

Lady *Gilford* with an air of real joy, that her sister was out of danger.

I WOULD not be thought to insinuate that her Ladyship was displeased at this intelligence; yet certain it is, she asked with a kind of fretful peevishness, if that was the case, why was she wrote to in such a violent hurry, and obliged to set out at an hour so unseasonable?

Mrs. *Stephens*, by way of an excuse, alledged her Lady's disorder had been a sudden swelling in her throat; that at the time the messenger was dispatched, she lay speechless; and it was then the opinion of doctor *Watkins* she could not out-live the night: but, contrary to the expectations of all about her, the swelling broke three hours before her Ladyship's arrival, since

since which she had been and still continued in a sweet sleep.

LAVINIA felt sincere satisfaction on hearing this account. Mrs. *Grosvenor* was a most deserving woman, and had ever shewn the fondest affection for her niece. With pleasure would Miss *Gilford* have dedicated great part of her time to this amiable relation; but her mother had never cordially relished her since the death of Mr. *Grosvenor*, for doing an act of exalted generosity, which, for example sake, I shall here give my readers.

A NIECE of Mr. *Grosvenor's*, a good and amiable girl, had engaged her affections to a worthy young man. This uncle, on whom was her sole dependence, obstinately opposed their union. His notions of ancestry were strained; he thought

thought Mr. *Disney* undeserving his alliance, because he could not trace back his family more than a hundred years.

EVERY argument was used to make him recede from a resolution never to give Miss *Flewin* sixpence if she married Mr. *Disney*; but they were used without success; he carried his obstinacy to the grave.

AFTER his decease, on examining the will, it appeared he had bequeathed five thousand pounds to his niece, provided she gave her hand to Sir *Toby Cummings*, a man of great family, without one other single recommendation; but in case she refused to marry Sir *Toby*, that sum, together with all the rest of his fortune, devolved to his widow.

Miss

Miss *Flewin* did not repine at this hard sentence. Her tears she would have suppressed ; but as that was impossible, she took an opportunity to leave the room.

Mrs. *Grosvenor* observed her distress, and followed the almost heart-broken girl. "I am come, my dear Miss *Flewin* (said she, taking her hand), "to do all in my power to wipe away "these tears. Every body, my love, "has failings ; your deserving uncle "was not exempt from them. But "let us remember only his virtues ; to "do which, you must oblige me by "accepting your legacy, without con- "ditions ;" saying which she turned from her, not waiting a reply.

THIS action of Mrs. *Grosvenor* had in it something so heinous in the eyes
of

of Lady *Gilford*, that, instead of giving those praises certainly her due, she left the house in a pet, saying, “ Since ‘‘ her thousands were so plenty, her ‘‘ own nephew and niece might, she ‘‘ thought, have come in for a share:” And probably but for this illness a reconciliation might never have been effected ; Mrs. *Grosvenor* resenting her sister’s behaviour ; rightly judging she was at liberty to do as she pleased with her own fortune.

BUT to return to Lady *Gilford*, *Lavinia*, and Mr. *Gore*, who we left in a parlour below, the two former waiting till Mrs. *Grosvenor* should awake, to go to her ; an event that happened just as they had refreshed themselves with a dish of tea.

THE meeting between the two sisters was most affecting on the part of Mrs. *Grosvenor*. She really loved Lady *Gilford*, though she despised her narrow way of thinking and acting. As for *Lavinia*, she bestowed on her the fondest caresses, which were returned with affectionate engaging tenderness.

A WEEK's confinement so far completed the recovery of this good lady, that she left her room at the end of that time, impatient to pay her respects to one of her visitors, whom she had not yet seen, *Lavinia* having greatly prepossessed her in favour of Mr. *Gore*; and no sooner did she see him than he established himself in her good opinion. She determined from this moment not to let so charming a pair leave her house till she had seen their

their nuptials solemnized ; knowing the character of her nephew, and the treatment his sister had met from him. Not that *Lavinia* had mentioned a syllable to her of his unkindness : No, she was too generous even to wish he might be lessened in the esteem of a person from whom he had expectations. Yet her aunt had heard it from others : Common Fame is no keeper of secrets.

HAVING been at *Millbridge* three weeks, and the young folks one morning walked out together, Mrs. *Grosvenor* took the opportunity of being alone with Lady *Gilford*, to desire her Ladyship would the next morning bestow a very deserving girl on a worthy lover, who was prepared to receive her as the best gift of Heaven. "I
had some thoughts (continued she)
" to

“ to have given her away myself; but,
“ for particular reasons, Sister, I now
“ desire that favour of you.”

“ With all my heart (replied
“ she); but as I am unacquainted
“ with the lady, or her intended hus-
“ band, and the marriage so near,
“ will it not appear odd for a stran-
“ ger—”

“ Not in the least (interrupted
“ Mrs. Grosvenor). I will take, on
“ myself to answer for the propriety of
“ your doing this kind office; and also
“ that my friends will be very happy
“ in your assistance.”

“ WELL, but, Sister (said Lady Gil-
“ ford), I wish you could procure me
“ an interview with them before to-
“ morrow,

"morrow, or I shall look mightily
"aukward."

"NOTHING can be more fortunate
(replied she): They drink tea with
"me this afternoon. But, as other
"company may happen in at the
"same time, before she enters the
"room I will place this ring on her
"finger, by which you may distin-
"guish her."

"GIVE me leave to look at it (said
Lady Gilford). It is an immense
fine brilliant!—Well, I protest!—
Worth at least five hundred pounds!
But you are used to make princely
presents, Sister." This she said, ac-
companied by a violent toss of the
head; the five thousand pounds be-
stowed on Mrs. Disney coming at that
instant fresh to her memory.

"I AL-

" I ALWAYS (returned Mrs. Grosvenor) consult the happiness of those I love. Heaven, Lady Gilford, has blessed me with riches. Can I, then, put them to a better use than by securing felicity to others? I feel a pleasure arising from it not in the power of hoarded millions to bestow. Besides, the lady this ring is designed for you will, after you are acquainted with her, love equal to myself."

" NOT I, indeed (returned her Ladyship, with a sneer). The person you appear so amazingly fond of, may, for aught I know, be deserving; but, upon my word, I have no notion of your violent regards. I have children to enjoy my fortune. But if Heaven had not blessed me with them, I should always

"ways have considered relations before strangers."

THOUGH this hint was pretty plain, Mrs. *Grosvenor* made no answer, but broke off the conversation by asking her ladyship to take a walk in the shrubbery. "The weather is so fine" (said she), that it is really a sin to sit within doors. Mr. *Gore* and my niece are of the same opinion. I fancy we shall find them in the elm walk."

SHE was right in this conjecture: *Lavinia* and her happy lover were placed beneath one of the loftiest trees, on an elegant Chinese seat, and so much engaged by a *tête-à-tête*, of what nature my readers are left to imagine, that they did not perceive

the

the approach of the two ladies, till they came close upon them.

"KEEP your seat, my dears (said "Mrs. Grosvenor); if we disturb you, "we are gone this moment."

"YOUR presence must always give "me pleasure, Madam (replied *Lavinia*)."

"You are a little insinuator, my "dear child. But come, Sister, pray "be seated. *Lavinia*, sit by me. "Mr. Gore and your mamma shall "marshal themselves as they please."

MR. GORE took his place on the other side of Miss *Gilford*; his manly face, if I may be permitted the expression, gracefully confused; which received

received no small addition from the blushing cheeks of his mistress.

“ I WANTED to see, I wanted to
“ talk to you (continued Mrs. Grosvenor). I have been saying to my
“ sister, that to-morrow we are to have
“ a wedding in our village: her Ladyship has promised to give away the
“ bride. Now tell me, *Lavinia*, tell
“ me, Mr. Gore, will you grace our
“ festival with your presence?”

“ DEAR, dear Madam (said her
“ trembling niece), can I refuse Mr.—
“ Bless me, what a fool! you, I meant,
“ any thing in my power? But what
“ says my mother?

“ I HAVE no objection (returned her
“ Ladyship), since your aunt desires it.”

“ As

"FOR me, Madam, you know my
"heart (said Mr. Gore); words there-
"fore are unnecessary."

"THANK you, thank you (cried
"she, smiling on each, and taking the
"hand of her niece). The bride, my
"dear, is thought to have one of the
"finest hands in the world; let me
"see if a bauble will add any thing to
"its beauty." At the same time tak-
ing the brilliant from her finger, she put
it on *Lavinia's*.

AT this moment Mr. Gore threw
himself at the feet of Lady Gilford,
entreating she would confirm the de-
lightful hope Mrs. Grosvenor's words
had made him entertain.

"INDEED, Sister (said that gene-
"rous woman, I shall be unhappy

“ unless you pardon the little artifice I have used; and convince me of it, by consenting to join the hands of *Lavinia* and her lover, who are only worthy of each other.”

“ You have greatly surprized me (replied her Ladyship)! So soon as to-morrow! Impossible! It cannot be! Rise, Mr. *Gore* (in a voice not the most harmonious); *Lavinia* and you are both to blame.”

“ Not in the least (said her sister). If there is any blame, let it fall on me. The contrivance was all my own; nor do I think it a bad one. What objection can you have? I suppose you some day or other intend they shall marry.”

“ I DO

“ I DO, (she replied) ; but I can
“ start ten thousand objections why it
“ cannot be so soon as to-morrow.”

“ GIVE us ten, out of that multi-
“ plicity,” said Mrs. *Grosvenor* smiling.

“ WELL, then, to satisfy you in
“ the first place, my son will know
“ nothing of the matter ; and un-
“ doubtedly must take it very ill, that
“ I have disposed of his sister without
“ consulting him.”

“ PSHA ! leave that affair to me ;
“ and if I do not satisfy him, why—I
“ will do all I can to unmarry them
“ again.”

“ I CANNOT bear this, Sister ; it is
“ treating me so much like a child.”

F 2 “ RIGHT ;

“ RIGHT ; and I look on your objection as a very childish one.”

“ WHAT ! I suppose too you would have my daughter marry without a settlement ? ”

“ Not so, neither, my good Sister. I mind the main chance, though not perhaps quite so much as yourself. But, to shew you I have not neglected it in regard to my niece,—for the last four days two lawyers of eminence have been busily employed in forwarding the writings. Mr. Gore, on *Wednesday* last, dispatched a messenger to his steward for the rent-roll of his estate, ordering those gentlemen to settle it entirely on your daughter. As to my niece’s fortune, I have taken the liberty to add

“ add ten thousand pounds to the five
“ thousand left her by her father. Now
“ if you forgive me, join the hands of
“ this amiable pair.”

MR. *Gore* and *Lavinia*, at the beginning of this conversation, receiving a silent hint from Mrs. *Grosvenor*, retired at a distance.

“ THERE is no resisting so much
“ generosity (replied Lady *Gilford*).
“ Lead me, my dear Sister, to this de-
“ serving man. What! settle his
“ whole estate on *Lavinia*! And you,
“ too, give her ten thousand pounds!
“ How can we ever return such obli-
“ gations?”

“ You more than repay them in
“ granting my request,” said Mrs.

F 3 *Grosvenor*;

Grosvenor; and taking her hand, led her to the Orangery, where a few minutes before she had seen the lovers enter.

I AM not going to describe their meeting. All was joy and transport, no doubt, on the part of Mr. *Gore*. As for *Lavinia*, modesty, gratitude, and love, had possession of every feature.

MRS. *Grosvenor*, by an agreeable vivacity, prevented her niece from thinking too seriously on an approaching event. The spirits of Lady *Gifford* had never before been so truly harmonized: She said a thousand obliging things, both to her daughter and Mr. *Gore*. She even forgot Sir *Francis*; or else, if thought of in this agreeable

agreeable hurry of affairs, it was not with her usual fear of offending him.

HERE wishing my readers a *bon repos*, I take my leave for the night, thinking so important an event as the wedding of Miss Gilford, deserves a new chapter.



C H A P. XVIII.

“THE dawn is overcast, the morning lours,” says the son of *Cato*. But this was not the case at *Millbridge*; for I have been told from good authority, that the sun never shone more dazzlingly bright than on the morning when Miss *Gilford* became Mrs. *Gore*; perhaps with an intention to outvie the beauteous blushing bride.

As this marriage will be kept a secret some days, till *Lavinia* gets her cloaths from *London*, I shall leave her at *Millbridge*, and step back to Miss *Coventry*.—Alas, my gentle reader, how

how am I shocked, how surprized, to find the alteration which has happened in that young lady in the three weeks we have been from *Weatly*? Where are her rosy cheek, sparkling eyes, and ruby lips? Where are they all fled? Some reason there must be for this sudden change! She assures her anxious father she was never better; to Lord, to Lady *L*—— she says the same; nor will she own her malady even to her favourite Dr. *Edgcombe*. If her disorder is not a bodily one, it is proper her mind should undergo an examination: For should it be seated there, the longer it continues undiscovered, the more difficult to eradicate. It cannot be the absence of her fair friend she regrets: She is not of a selfish disposition: *Maria* rejoices in the happiness of Mrs. *Gore*, and has written her a letter of congratulation.

Does she dislike her noble relations ? Her conduct affirms the contrary : She watches their looks for opportunities to oblige ; whilst they appear to doat on their charming cousin.

SHE admires Miss *Hastings* ; nor is she less pleased with Mr. *Stormont*, who are tenderly attached to each other.

MR. *Vaughan* and his son come the last under my observation. The former of these, a very facetious old gentleman, is also in high favour with Miss *Coventry*. But as to the latter, I know not what to say : Her behaviour to him has something in it of restraint, yet blended with no tincture of dislike. Indeed, it would be unaccountable if it had ; Mr. *Edward Vaughan* being the object of general admiration.

Some

Some admired the charms of his person ; others his sense, his affability, his noble air, his winning sweetnes, the harmony of his voice : The good revere him for his virtues ; their opposites for telling them their faults, if under the disagreeable necessity of doing it, in so mild, so friendly a manner, as divested reproof of its keen edge.

A LITTLE elf is just perched on my pen, and, in compassion to my stupidity, makes a discovery, which, perhaps, without his assistance, I should not have been able to make. Many of my readers, I dare say, who have more experience in these matters, might have found out that Mr. *Edward Vaughan*, though not from any dislike, was the sole cause of that alteration so visible in the lovely face of *Maria*.

How does the fly urchin delight to hoodwink those he has rendered obedient to his power? Miss *Coventry* really thought for many days, that those praises she gave the graceful youth, whenever he was absent, were only an echo to those she heard from every other mouth. She did not know, or at least would not allow herself to believe, her heart was any ways concerned in them. It was but four days since, as I could find by my little assistant, that she had made the important discovery of its real situation. To that moment, or rather some time before, I shall go back for the intelligence of my readers.

Miss *Coventry* had always thought her heart invulnerable. She had, hitherto, indeed, felt the most perfect indifference. Love had ever been a stranger

stranger to her bosom. Her father, the good Doctor, and *Lavinia*, had till now possessed it entirely. Mr. *Vaughan* and his son were but just come from abroad; the elder gentleman an intimate friend of Lord *L—*, and at his request accompanied the party we have already mentioned to *Hartly-Row*. After his Lordship had embraced Miss *Coventry*, and introduced to her his Lady and Miss *Hastings*, he next presented both Mr. *Vaughans*, as friends he very warmly esteemed.

MARIA received them with such inimitable ease, such true politeness, with looks so sweetly modest, with smiles so irresistibly pleasing, that poor *Edward* gazed first, then listened, and paid his heart a forfeit to the interview.

NEVER

NEVER was a passion more sudden or more violent than his. It could be exceeded by nothing but his respect for the person who created it. True love is ever diffident. He feared by a discovery of his, to offend the woman on earth he most wished to oblige. But as a fire smothered will sometimes flame, so that lighted in the bosom of Mr. *Edward Vaughan*, notwithstanding all his endeavours to conceal it, soon blazed out, and became revealed to *Maria*.

ONE day, the weather being remarkably fine, Mr. *Coventry* proposed bowling. His daughter begged to be excused, as she wanted to finish a letter to Mrs. *Gore*; but the company with difficulty accepting her excuse, she promised to join them on the Green,

after

after having dispatched some family-affairs which required her presence.

JUST as she had settled her little matters with the housekeeper, and was preparing to follow her friends, *Edward*, who had thought the time of separation long, came in pursuit of her.

“ I AM an intruder, my dear Miss *Coventry* (said he, taking her hand respectfully); yet I come, Madam, from the company, impatient that you deprive them such an age of your agreeable presence.”

“ WHY style yourself an intruder (replied *Maria*, smiling), when you bring so flattering a message? Is it possible my friends, who are so pleasantly

“ ingly amused, could bestow a
“ thought on me?”

“ It is plain Miss Coventry is in-
“ sensible to her own value, or she
“ would else know it was not in the
“ power of any amusement to com-
“ pensate for her absence.”

“ POLITENESS in you, Sir, is habi-
“ tual; but pray forbear to lavish it
“ on us poor country girls. If you
“ should talk in this strain, we pos-
“ sibly may not understand it. Our
“ rural swains are all rustic simpli-
“ city.”

“ I ENVY, Madam, those swains
“ (sighing). How serene, how calm
“ do they pass through life!”

“ PERHAPS,

" PERHAPS not so serenely as you
" suppose : They have troubles, I
" dare say, with which we are unac-
" quainted. But what think you, Mr.
" *Vaughan* (continued she, laughing),
" of a trial to convince you of your
" error ? Are you willing to exchange
" your laced coat for a rufflet frock ?
" Your hair you may still keep ; only
" it must be cropped close, and
" combed sleek on your forehead.
" And now what say you to my
" scheme?"

" THAT I embrace it with rapture,
" on condition you permit me to
" chuse my shepherdess. Grant me
" but that, and you shall see the me-
" tamorphose in an instant."

" WHAT you ask (said *Maria*,
" visibly confused) is not in my power
" to

" to grant : But this I promise, when
" you reveal the name of your fa-
" vorite nymph, if I should happen
" to be acquainted with her, I will use
" my interest in your favour."

" I REQUEST no more (he replied,
" kissing her not-withdrawn hand).
" Whisper to your gentle bosom, that
" I can never love any but the divine
" Miss Coventry."

MARIA's blushing cheek, her whole sweetly-abashed face, might, had he been less diffident, have given him hopes that the declaration of his passion had not offended : But as lovers construe every thing wrong, he imagined he saw anger and resentment arise in that breast where it had never yet entered.

" My

" My dear Miss Coventry (continued he), pardon my presumption. " My offence was unpremeditated. I would have kept the secret of my heart; but it escaped me inadvertently. Do not, most lovely of women, kill me with this cruel silence. Speak to me; tell me only that I have not offended past forgiveness."

" What would you have me say, " Mr. Vaughan," asked the trembling Maria?

" Say, my heavenly creature, I am not your aversion."

" My aversion (repeated she, sweetly blushing)! Does not my father, does not the good Doctor, do not Lord and Lady L—, all highly regarded

“ gard you? How then can you be
“ my aversion?”

“ ANGELIC goodness (he replied)!
“ But you know not, Madam, to what
“ a height I would aspire. Your
“ heart is the inestimable prize I seek,
“ and must be miserable if you refuse
“ it. Consider—”

“ I CONSIDER nothing (interrupted
“ she, with a smile which diffused in-
“ expressible pleasure to the soul of
“ Mr. Vaughan) but that you are an
“ encroacher, and that I have listened
“ too long. A pretty *tête-à-tête* truly!
“ What, I suppose you really think
“ you see before you a *Daphne* or a
“ *Sylvia*, and, in return, I am to ima-
“ gine you transformed to a faithful
“ *Coridon*. ”

THE entrance of the elder Mr. Vaughan prevented a reply.

“ JUST as I expected, just as I expected (holding up both hands as he approached them)! Ay, ay, I knew well enough, *Edward*, what the sprain in your hand would come to. In truth, my pretty creature (applying himself to *Maria*) this Love may well be called a child of the Devil.”

“ I AM sorry, Sir (she returned, with an arch look), you have reason to say this.”

“ I WILL more than say it (he replied); I will prove it too; for the Devil is the father of lyars; and is not at least one half what a lover says

“ says made up of lies? Here’s *Ed-*
“ *ward* could not bowl; no, not he,
“ so violently had he sprained his
“ hand; when, was it to be examined,
“ I will lay any bett’ it is as well,
“ though not quite so hard, as my
“ own. However, he is an honest
“ fellow; and if he has told you he
“ loves you, I will be bound for him
“ he said no more in that than the
“ truth. Nay, by my truth, young
“ Lady, I cannot help loving you
“ myself. You are too good and
“ too pretty for any body but my *Ed-*
“ *ward*.”

Miss *Coventry* answered him only by a graceful bow. As for his son, he expressed the gratitude which he could not avoid feeling in a manner so inimitably charming, that, had not

Maria's

Maria's heart been already gone, she could not after this have detained it.

THE sky portending a sudden shower, drove in the other company. The conversation became general ; their tea was sipped without scandal ; and, soon after, cards were produced ; not because agreeable subjects were exhausted, but to make every thing pleasing to Lady *L*—, who had been accustomed to them in the *beau monde*, but never sacrificed either repose or good-humour to the mottled deities.

DAME Fortune so contrived matters for *Edward*, that he and Miss *Coventry* cut out after the first rubber. The latter, retiring to a bow-window at which was chained her squirrel, took up some nuts, and was presenting

ing them to the little insensible from the whitest hand in the universe, when her lover, following the dictates of his passion, placed himself at her elbow, and attempting to take it, his presumption was punished by the teeth of *Maria's* favourite, which seized on one of his fingers.

“ Cross animal (said she, frowning) ! go back to thy cell. Was it “ not for my love to thy master, thou “ shouldst be banished from my sight.

“ A PRESENT from the good Doctor, I presume, Madam ? ”

“ No, Sir.”

“ PARDON my inquisitiveness. Your father then ? But did Miss *Coventry* get it from abroad ? ”

“ MY

" My father has never seen it till
" very lately ; neither can I tell you
" if it is foreign."

" HAPPY giver ! (said he, with a
" sigh, perhaps the deepest that ever
" came from a human heart.) I see
" my fate ; I was not worthy. I will
" try to bear it with resignation." Say-
ing this, he went back to the card-
table, leaving *Maria* full of astonish-
ment at his words and manner. It
was some minutes before she could re-
collect herself enough to discover to
what it was owing. How, then, did
she blame her indiscretion ? It was too
plain he thought her heart engaged to
the person who had given the squirrel.
Could she undeceive him ? Honour,
gratitude, forbade her. The secret of
Mr. *Gore*, at all events, must not be

given up. Her heart was torn by a thousand disagreeable imaginations. She would have given the world to have convinced the amiable youth, that it was for him alone she had ever felt the least partiality.

TIRED with her own reflections, she rejoined the party, assuming an air of ease and serenity which she was far from feeling.

HER eyes were the whole night, when unobserved, employed in watching those of her beloved *Edward*. What new cause found she there for uneasiness! Those features which used to bloom with health and cheerfulness, were now overclouded, pale, and dejected. His frequent sighs but too plainly told her what he suffered.

His

His father was extremely concerned at this alteration, which was visible to the whole company. He had no surmise that it was occasioned by Miss *Coventry*: He plumed himself on being a penetrating physiognomist; and had discovered, in the countenance of that lady, no dislike to his dear *Edward*. He therefore credited an excuse his son framed, of a violent pain in his head, which gave him a pretence of retiring early to his chamber; nor, by all his entreaties, could he prevail on the old gentleman to leave him till he was in bed, and had taken some sack-whey.

Poor *Maria* stood in little less need of assistance; especially when, on his return, he declared great apprehensions that his *Edward* was

seized with a fever. Every one expressed their concern, and tried to comfort the good father; but their efforts were ineffectual: He sat with them but a few minutes; then starting from his chair, “ I cannot be easy (he “ cried) though I have left *Scipio* “ with him. I must go myself, and “ listen at his door. My poor boy! “ My poor dear boy! what would be-“ come of me, should I lose thee!”

“ Good creature (said Lord L—, “ as he left the room)! Hearts such as “ his are invaluable.”

“ I NEVER saw a face (replied Mr. “ Coventry) that bore a truer index of “ the mind. I revere the tender love “ that glows in his honest breast for “ this amiable son.”

“ How

" How would your reverence be
 " heightened (added Lord L—), was
 " I to tell you a few of those worthy
 " generous actions with which I am
 " acquainted, but not at liberty to
 " reveal."

" My dear (said Mr. Coventry), I
 " would have you send the house-
 " keeper sometimes to Mr. Vaughan's
 " apartment: This black servant may
 " not be used to sick people."

MARIA was rising to obey her father, when his Lordship prevented her, by assuring them *Scipio* was not only the most faithful, but the most tender creature in the world. " I know (continued he) that he will never be taxed with neglect or negligence where the peace or safety of his master are concerned. Once

" he has saved his life already ; and I
" dare say would do it a second time,
" even at the expence of his own."

HERE Mr. Vaughan re-entered, with the pleasing account that his son was much better, and just composing himself to sleep ; which gave a momentary ease to the wounded heart of Maria ; though, when she retired to rest, rest flew from her ; and finding it would be in vain to pursue it, she arose at five, to put in execution a scheme concluded on for some hours, of no less consequence than a visit to the Hermit, whom she proposed acquainting with what had happened the preceding day ; and also to request his advice how to extricate herself from the perplexing difficulty into which she had inadvertently plunged.

Just

Just as she was stepping to the chariot with these intentions, she saw *Scipio* at the door. She enquired impatiently after his master; and being told by that faithful creature, who had sat up by him the whole night, that he was much better, "Thank God!" said the tender-hearted *Maria*, almost loud enough to be overheard; ordering the coachman to drive as fast as possible, intending to be home again before the family met at breakfast.

HERE I must observe, that since the arrival of their company from *London*, it had been the constant custom of Miss *Coventry* to drive, at least, every other morning to *Combe Woods*. Nothing would she suffer to obstruct this laudable duty of visiting her adopted father, who could only be said to enjoy life when she was with him.—But it is

not my design to attend Miss Coventry ; I shall therefore go back to that hour, when the preceding evening Mr. Edward Vaughan retired to his apartment, carrying with him a guest which never fails to torment those who entertain him. Numberless are the names he goes by. *Shakespeare* calls him “ green-“ eyed monster :” but I think with more propriety he might have been term’d a “ pelican,” as he is sure to feed on those from whom he draws his existence.

SCIPIO, almost distracted to see his beloved master devoured with grief, entreated, begged even with tears, to know the cause. “ Indeed, my “ *Masar*, your poor *Scipio* die (said “ the honest creature) if you no “ tell him. He see you be very bad “ in your dear heart, or you no
“ sigh

"sigh so.—Folks in my country do
 "just so, when de be in love. Hea-
 "ven preserve my *Masar* from
 "being in love."

"WHY, *Scipio* (replied Mr. *Vaughan*),
 "is there any thing so very dreadful
 "in that passion, that makes you pray
 "so heartily against it? Was you ever
 "in love?"

"O YES, my *Masar*, many, many
 "time; but not wit your colour.—
 "Your colour be bad colour, *Masar*;
 "your women be bad women."

"You have seen but few of them yet,
 "*Scipio*; but can the most beautiful of
 "your Tawneys compare with the mis-
 "tress of this house? Her eyes, her teeth,
 "her lips, for colour they may equal;

"but can they shew such symmetry of
features! such a shape!"

"Ah *Masar, Masar!* (shaking his
head) me see now what be de mat-
ter:—You look, you do look, my
Masar, just as poor *Pompey* look be-
fore he hang himself."

"WHAT tempted him, my good
creature, to commit so rash an ac-
tion?"

"POMPEY love *Phebe*; *Phebe* no
love *Pompey*: so *Pompey* cry—*Pom-*
pey howl;—but still no *Phebe* love
him:—so ten, my *Masar*, after he
cry and howl again, he hang himself
because *Phebe* no love him."

"WELL

" WELL but, — *Scipio*, suppose I
" should be in love, why is my case so
" desperate as *Pompey's*?"

" O MY *Masar*, your mistres no
" kind,—no kind to you!—she no
" love you :—she love anoder."

" AH *Scipio*, what is it you say?"

" ME say, my *Masar*, your sweet-
" heart meet man in de trees,—in de
" woods.—*Dick* drives her in de
" coach to de trees—to de woods—to
" meet man!"

" AND did *Dick* tell you this? I
" was but half miserable before! What
" man does Miss *Coventry* meet?—In
" what woods does she meet him?"

"NAY, my *Masar*, me know:—
"Dick know noting that she do meet
"man. Dick say he tink she meet
"man. Dick say her airing to de
"trees—to de woods—be not for no-
"ting."

THIS last speech of honest *Scipio*
eased his master's heart from part of
its intolerable load; yet still he asked
with impatience, "What airings do
"you talk of? She has taken none since
"my arrival?"

"Ah *Masar*, you know no matter!
"Your love be gone and home again
"before you be up in de morn."

"BUT you have not told me to
"what woods she is carried? Good.
"Scipio, if thou knowest, tell me
"quickly."

"ME

" Me would tell *Masar*, did me
" know. *Dick* be a beast: *Dick* no
" tell me."

" WHAT do you mean by a
" beast?"

" HE put de glass to his mouth;
" he take it away: he put it to his
" mouth, and take it away so many
" times, he could no put there any
" more:—so he fall all along, and
" four white men carried him to bed.
" Was he no beast, *Masar*?"

" A BEAST, indeed! But has he
" never told you any more about his
" Lady?"

" No more, no more, *Masar*:
" *Dick* never be the beast since."

MR. Vaughan, who would have laughed heartily at any other time, was now absorbed in melancholy reflections, and could not help exclaiming, "Why did I return to my native land! " "I ought to have known before, from "dreadful experience, that to me, at "least, it could produce nothing but "misfortunes." Then turning to Scipio, "Could you not contrive (said "he) for me to speak to *Dick?*"— Again reflecting a moment, "No, I "will not speak to him. Why should "I bribe him to betray the secrets of "his Lady? Yet these heart-rending "airings! I must, I will know what "thy mean. On you, my good "Scipio, I can depend. Follow her "carriage; but follow it at a distance. "Your feet are as swift as those of "the fleetest horse; watch well the "motions of my Love: Yet be cau- "tious

"fitious that neither she or any of her
attendants may discover thee. Even
a certainty, my good creature, that
she loves another man better than
thy master, cannot make him more
unhappy than that dreadful suspense
to which he is now reduced."

"Be there de ting under de blue
heaven (replied the kind soul) that
I no do for serve my dear *Masar*?
Have me no left my own world,
my fater, my moter, to follow you
to yours? Now, my *Masar*, should
you go to de world farther tan this,
me go too, if a you promise they no
make me a whitel man. You once
tell a me, *Masar*, when we come
there, we be all changed: now fine
don't chuse to be qter colour."

"Good

"Good creature! thy virtues will
"there shine brighter (replied Mr.
"Vaughan) than diamonds would here
"on thy jetty skin." At the same time
holding out his hand, *Scipio* fell
upon his knees, kissing it with a re-
verence and ardour which I fear
some of us cannot be said to feel
when we prostrate ourselves before
the Lord of the universe.

AFTER this conversation Mr.
Vaughan pretended to fall asleep, partly
that he might be at liberty to indulge
his own reflections, and partly to quiet
the mind of his faithful *Scipio*; though,
if he had found any inclination
of that kind, it would have been im-
possible to have indulged it, as his care-
ful attendant every five or six minutes
opened the curtains, and held a candle
to his face: at other times he would
lay

lay his ear to the mouth of his master, to discover if he breathed. These were his constant employments till the day broke, when going to the window he saw the chariot drive round to the front door, he left the room with caution: and was at the door before Miss *Coventry*. Her tender enquiries for his master almost convinced *Scipio Dick's* conjectures were ill founded. Hoping to find this really the case, he set out with alacrity, following the track of her chariot, never once coming near enough to be seen.

It stopped at the usual place. Miss *Coventry* alighted, and with a quick step crossed the little Common. A brake which led to the wood brought him to the same spot, though by a different way. He followed her unperceived. When she stopped at the Rock,

Rock, Scipio was concealed behind a large clump of trees ; but his surprise was so great that he was in danger of discovering himself, when Miss Coventry opened the little door which led into the Rock, shut it after her, and disappeared in an instant.

THE Black, who had no notion that there could be a door in that place, really imagined he had seen the Rock open and swallow her up ; and fearing to stay, lest the same fate might attend him, he once more took to his heels, measuring back his steps with so much eager speed, that he was almost fainting when he entered his master's chamber.

Such a ghastly figure could not again be exhibited : Eyes staring, or rather rolling ; hands extended ; nose stretched

stretched to an enormous breadth ; add to this, his whole person not dropping, but streaming with sweat.

"Good Heavens (said Mr. Vaughan) ! " what can have so greatly discom-
posed thee ? "

" Oh Mafar, Mafar ! (cried the af-
frighted creature) ! Great chance
you ever see poor Scipio more.
Oh Rocks do no so in my country. Ah
poor mistress ! you safe enough ;
if you no come out again to plague
my Mafar."

" What do you mean, Scipio ?
What am I to understand ? Thou
art certainly bereft of thy senses.
Leave this nonsense. Did Miss Co-
ventry go out to-day ? Did you do
as "

" as I desired? Did she meet any
" person? Is she returned?"

" Me no come out of dat wall,
" *Masar*, if me be fastened in; tell a
" me, *Masar*?"

" Why that question (cried Mr.
" Vaughan, a little peevishly)? Thou
" puttest my patience to a severe trial.

" Why then, my *Masar*, if me no
" come out of dat wall, your mistress
" no come out of de rock. Me sware
" by de moon, me saw de rock swal-
" low your mistress."

" Good God! *Scipio*, what can I
" make of all this? It is impossible to
" be as thou hast said, and you are
" too honest to impose a falsehood on
" me.

" me. This affair is extremely un-
" accountable ; but it cannot be as you
" apprehend. Ah ! see, the chariot
" is returned, and Miss Coventry alight-
" ing from it."

SCIPIO would not be convinced that it was really her, but owned there was a great likeness : " No, no (cried the faithful creature) ; dat be no *Masar's* mistress ; dat be bad spirit. *Masar's* mistress be very sure in de rock."

MR. VAUGHAN knew not what to make of the intelligence brought him by *Scipio* ; neither could he guess by what accident his senses had been so strongly imposed upon ; therefore determined himself to find out the bottom of this mysterious affair.

ENJOINING *Scipio* to secrecy, he told him that he would go and see this dreadful rock, of which he reported such wonders : “ But it must be (said he), when Miss *Coventry* again takes that road ; and be sure get out of your friend *Dick* the next time she orders the chariot, as it will be necessary for us to set out something earlier, that we may conceal ourselves and horses before she arrives.”

To this *Scipio* would not for a long while consent ; nothing but an absolute command could have prevailed on him to carry his beloved master to the horrible place of which he had such dread.



C H A P. XIX.

THE entrance of the elder Mr. *Vaughan* broke off this conversation. Not that I would have my readers suppose it was the first visit his father had made him that morning; anxious fears for the health of *Edward* had awaked him before his usual hour; but finding the invalid better than he expected, he told him he would take a walk in those beautiful plantations with which this house was surrounded.

MR. *Vaughan* was now returned from that walk, intending to propose something to his son which he thought could

could not fail of giving him pleasure. *Scipio*, who was by this time tolerably recovered from his fright, left the room as soon as his old master entered.

“ I HOPE, dear Sir (said *Eduard*, who was just dressed), you have been agreeably entertained in your little excursion.”

“ FAITH (replied he), it is a noble place, boy ; but not half so noble as the possessor. *Coventry* has a good heart, and would be an excellent companion if he was not quite so low-spirited.”

“ AND yet I know your heart so well, my dear father (returned the other), that I am sure you honour him for this very disposition. Ah, “ Sir !

“Sir! had you or I lost such a
“wife——”

“WHY that’s true, *Ned*; I confess
“it a heavy misfortune. Faith, *Maria*
“is a sweet girl; they say, the very
“picture of her mother.”

“MARIA, Sir! *Maria!*”

“OH ho, young man! what, does
“her name raise your colour, and can’t
“you speak it without hesitation? I
“thought as much yesterday; I hint-
“ed as much, you know. I am sel-
“dom out in these matters. And,
“for your comfort, my boy, I can see
“the little cherub has no dislike to
“you.”

A PROFOUND sigh, which issued
from the breast of *Edward*, spoke he

was not of his father's opinion ; who thus continued :

" THIS very morning I'll propose
 " the affair, by the Lord *Harry* ! I
 " have no notion of standing shilly-
 " shally, when both are willing. My
 " fortune shall be all your own ; I'll
 " lay it before *Coventry* ; he shall take
 " every farthing, if he will but consent
 " to make my dear child happy."

" MY more than father ! your
 " goodness, your generosity oppresses
 " me. But, dearest, dear Sir, though
 " I own I love Miss *Coventry*, yet, for
 " several reasons, I must beg you will
 " not speak on this occasion, either
 " to the lady or her father, for some
 " days. As to your kind, generous
 " intentions, how shall I find words to
 " thank you ? "

" I HATE

"I HATE words. Your mistress,
"my boy (with a smile), may like
"them better. However, since you
"desire it, I will wait one week be-
"fore I say any thing of this matter :
"though, by Jove, I cannot think
"for what reason. When I was at
"your years, had such a pretty girl
"been in the case, I should have de-
"sired no *put-offs*."

HERE a summons to breakfast hastened them down stairs, where they found the company all met, and the elegant, the charming Miss Coventry seated at the tea-table: I cannot say blooming and rosy as the morning; Grief, the preceding night, had with her malignant finger touched the queen of flowers; or, to speak more plain, the colour on Maria's cheeks

H 2 had

had given place to an alarming pallor; at which change none felt greater uneasiness than *Edward*. When her friends expressed their concern for her health, she assured them it was never better. “ I have been up (said she) “ more than four hours, and have “ had a delightful airing: my dear “ father is fond of my using exer-“ cise.”

THE words “ delightful airing” brought so much colour into the face of *Edward*, that, to hide his confusion, he was obliged to leave his chair, and go to the window.

“ HAD you mentioned your intentions last night, (said Miss *Hastings*) “ I would gladly have been of your party.—I approve of early rising:—
“ though

“ though it is but seldom that I can
“ muster up resolution enough to put
“ it into practice.”

A CONVERSATION was now introduced very agreeable to those who like to behold the infant beauties of the Morning ; but as I apprehend few of my readers ever see *Aurora* but in a more advanced state, I shall for that reason omit it, to acquaint them the Hermit had by his fine sense and philosophical arguments convinced his dear daughter, as he now always called Miss *Coventry*, that “ whatever “ is, is best.” “ My child (said he), “ as you have described this young “ man, he appears worthy your ten- “ derest regard. There is but one “ thing in his disposition I would wish “ otherwise.—Jealousy, my Love, of “ all the destructive passions, is that

“ which threatens the greatest misery
“ to its possessor.—I do not say but it
“ will sometimes take root in minds
“ the most perfect: in the richest
“ ground are often found the most
“ luxuriant weeds: but from such a
“ soil reason can quickly eradicate them.
“ You ask my advice how to act.—
“ Your own good sense, my dear, will
“ dictate better than it is possible for
“ me to advise:—Yet as you state the
“ matter, I think it absolutely necessary
“ that if you can come to an eclaircisse-
“ ment with any propriety, you should
“ satisfy the young gentleman that the
“ person who gave you the little animal
“ which has occasioned both such dis-
“ quiet, is a poor old man, who has
“ been tossed to and fro on the waves
“ of Misfortune, and at length escap-
“ ing the rough rocks against which
“ they have so often dashed him, has
“ crept

" crept from the world to this hidden
" corner, where he waits his final disso-
" lution.—For your and his happiness
" (continued he), I consent you shall
" reveal my secret:—but under the
" same restrictions on which it was dis-
" covered to yourself.—If my dear
" daughter approves of this plan, let
" me see her as soon as she has put it
" into execution."

MARIA with a thousand acknowledgements embraced the good man's proposal. She promised all he asked, and returned to *Hartly-row* with a mind more at ease by the hope that it was now in her power to convince *Edward* his suspicions were without foundation.

ALL that day passed, and she found not the opportunity she so much wished

for. Instead of seeking to engage, he seemed studiously to avoid her. The following was equally unpropitious. A thousand times he was about to throw himself at her feet; but a sacred power seemed to with-hold him.

How impatiently did he wait till the next night, when, on going to his chamber, *Scipio* acquainted him that *Dick* had received his lady's orders to get ready at six in the morning.

THIS intelligence drove sleep from the eyes of Mr. *Vaughan*, and the hours between twelve and five seemed an age; for uncertainty is doubtless the most unwearied of all situations.

AT length appeared the much wished-for dawn, and *Scipio*, not like the

the Sun unless in an eclipse, entered the room.

WHILST assisting his master to dress, he used a thousand prayers and entreaties that he would not go to the Wood.

“ I can’t for my life (said Mr. Vaughan)
“ think what whim, my good creature,
“ has entered thy head; but prithee
“ say no more to dissuade me: I am
“ resolved to see this wonderful Rock.
“ Yet, at the same time, to quiet thy
“ honest fears about me, I promise
“ not to venture near it, if I see the least
“ appearance of danger.”

SOMEWHAT satisfied with this assurance, he conducted his master, though not reluctantly, to those trees which had concealed him on his first excursion.

" I SHOULD think this place (said
" Mr. Vaughan) enchantingly beautiful,
" if it did not occur to me that here
" the most charming of her sex makes
" happy with her presence some fa-
" voured lover. Yet perhaps I wrong
" her:—May she not pass those hours
" in pleasing contemplation!—These
" woods seem calculated to inspire
" them.—Besides, does not her un-
" spotted reputation—her delicacy—
" that duty—that reverence—she pays
" the best of parents,—all declare that
" she would not receive the private ad-
" dresses of any man?—Why had I
" not sooner made these reflections
" (continued he)? Certainly my doubts
" were groundless. What must she
" think of my late behaviour?"

WHILST his master was indulging
these cogitations, *Scipio* had fixed his
eyes

eyes on that place which he so much dreaded, expecting every moment to see it again open ; expectations by which he was so greatly terrified, that his woolly hair gradually uncurled, and at last stood almost erect : nor did his fears receive any small addition from the sudden appearance of Miss *Coventry*, who was entered the narrow path, and with nimble steps speeded towards the Rock.

At this sight he was going to roar out ; but his master, who had also seen her, forbade him, on the forfeiture of his love.

This was enough : he would have been mute, though a knife had been held at his throat : he only fell on his knees, and squeezing the hand of Mr. *Vaughan*, in a whisper begged he

would not be deluded by that evil spirit. But alas ! his master was incapable of answering him ; his jealousy, like a torrent, was returned, rushing on him with such rapidity, that it almost bore away his senses.

THE poor Black, who was still on his knees, had not seen what raised his master to a degree of frenzy.

“ SCIPIO, (said he with eyes flashing fire) if you love me, if you value my eternal peace, if you wish not to see me miserable the rest of my days, —attempt not to follow me ; —move not a step from this spot till I return. —Should you disobey me, this is the last day we live together.”

HE did not wait for an answer, but flew to the Rock, and felt joy, if his bosom

bosom could now be said to harbour such a guest, when he saw the door still open; Miss *Coventry* neglecting a thing she had never done before, to shut it on the inside.

THOUGHT is not swifter than were the steps of *Edward* till he reached the bottom of the Cavern.—There he stopped, and thus argued with himself:

—“ By what right do I enter this dark
“ abode?—Why should I by my pre-
“ fence interrupt their stolen inter-
“ views?—Without a doubt she loves
“ my happy rival.—That hand which
“ I saw her receive with such trans-
“ port,—nay kiss it, if my eyes deceived
“ me not;—that hand must and ought
“ to be the hand to which her’s should
“ be united. Adieu, thou fallen an-
“ gel!”, continued he; and was just
going

going to return: but hearing Miss Coventry pronounce the name of *Vaughan*, and a voice which thrilled through his very soul repeat it emphatically, he rushed forward, entered the cave, and throwing himself on the neck of the Hermit, something that bore so near a resemblance to death as might have been easily mistaken for it, took from him the power of speech: he could only cry out “My father!” At the same instant, the old man giving a violent scream, both fell lifeless to the ground.

Good God! what a fight for Miss Coventry! It almost bereft her of her senses.—She tried to disunite the arms of her beloved *Edward* from the neck of her adopted father; but Death’s younger brother rendered all her efforts

forts ineffectual.—She applied her eau-de-luce first to one, then to the other.

WHAT would she have given for the assistance of honest *Simon* and *Betty*; but she knew not the dark meandering path that led to their abode.—The next people who presented themselves to her affrighted imagination, were her own servants; and to these she fled.

HER love, her terror, her concern, had transformed her to a second *Mercy*. To have seen her, you must have thought wings had supplied the place of feet.

ALREADY had she skimmed the Woods, and was alighted on the Common, when three or four horsemen came

came full speed towards her. Their appearance at any other time would have filled her breast with apprehensions, but had now a quite different effect.

STEPPING up to the first without looking in his face, “ I beg for hea-
“ ven’s sake, Sir, (said she) if you have
“ the least compassion—”

“ GOOD God! my child!” inter-
rupted Mr. Coventry, dismounting,
and catching her in his paternal arms:
“ What alarms you thus? What has
“ brought you to this place unat-
“ tended?”

SHE had not time to answer, *Scipio*
at that instant seizing her by the arm,
swearing by the sun, moon, and stars,
she was an evil spirit, and should not
live

live another minute, if she did not produce his dear *Masar*.

THE distracted *Maria* was freed from his paw by her father and Mr. *Vaughan*, the latter begging she would pardon the honest fellow's frenzy.
“ *Scipio* thinks (said he) that you have
“ kidnapped my son. He has told us
“ strange tales of a rock that swallows
“ up every one who comes near it: He
“ has sworn that he saw you and my
“ *Edward* closed in it. Though we
“ gave no attention to his idle story,
“ we were obliged, unless we would
“ see him put an end to his life, to
“ follow him hither.”

“ I CAN account for what the good
“ creature has told you (said Miss *Coventry*), but have not time now for
“ an explanation. Follow my steps,
“ if

"if you hope ever again to see that person you call your son:" Saying which she speeded her steps towards the Cave, which she entered so precipitately, that they had not time to ask any questions.

THE Hermit recovered in the absence of *Maria*, and was now leaning over the body of *Edward*, his eyes rivetted on his still lifeless face, the big tears falling on it in such abundance as plainly shewed it was not in the power of water to recover him.

SCIPIO rushed in after Miss *Coventry*: the fears for his master having got the better of those for his own life, he paid no attention to any other object.— Springing forwards, he caught him in his arms,—and in spite of all resistance ran with him into the air, where

where laying him on the grass, he began to shew some signs of returning life.

No sooner had the worthy creature performed this kind office, than he was obliged to give place to two who pressed forwards, both calling themselves the fathers of their dear, their beloved, and one of his restored son.

Now followed such a scene as my pen cannot describe. Mr. *Vaughan*, who the Hermit at first sight recollects to be that kind, that generous friend with whom his darling *Edward* had left *England*, now again restored the noble, the deserving youth to his arms.—How did he strain by turns to his grateful bosom his friend, and that dear

dear son he had so long thought dead.

FOR a long time nothing was to be heard but broken interrupted sentences. The joy they felt knew no bounds; it would not admit of method: it was more than an hour before it began to subside; though in that time Miss *Coventry* and her father partook of their caresses. Nor was the good *Scipio* forgot: his happiness was supreme. To see his master restored to life and to his parent, filled his honest soul with tumultuous gladness, which shewed itself in a thousand antick motions.—He skipped to and fro like one possest, kissing the hands of this truly happy company, which they obligingly extended for that purpose; nor could he avoid repeating his salute
on

on the charming hand of *Maria*. He was now intirely reconciled to that young Lady, and absolutely convinced of her being flesh and blood. Mr. *Coventry*, in order to calm this sudden gust of transport in his faithful breast, begged he would return to *Hartly-row*, and send Lord *L*—’s coach to the Wood immediately; “For I cannot consent, Sir (speaking to Mr. *Gore*), that you shall ever again return to your gloomy habitation. My daughter, whilst you was giving vent to parental rapture, has told me the heads of your hitherto melancholy story.”

“INDEED, indeed, my dear Sir, (said *Maria*) you must oblige my father: let your adopted daughter prevail. Can you, will you refuse her?”

“HE

“ HE must, he shall (said Mr. Vaughan, taking his hand). What does my friend think?—Is not five years enough to have been buried? Besides, *Edward* shall not again lose his father.”

“ ALLOW me, my second parent, to declare (said the graceful youth) that if my most revered and beloved father will not quit this cell, I also must make it the place of my abode.”

“ THAT you shall not (returned Mr. Gore); I cannot refuse my child, my friends. Though I had determined never more to appear in the world, yet it was thy supposed death, my dear *Edward*, which occasioned that determination; and since Heaven has restored thee so unexpectedly, let my grateful

"grateful thanks to the Almighty be
"poured out before thousands and
"ten thousands of his people! But
"why, why, my generous good friend
"(to Mr. Vaughan), did you not be-
fore acquaint me with the joyful
tidings?"

"I CERTAINLY should have done
"it (returned he), if you had given
"me a direction to this your country-
"seat."

"I SEE it is only myself that am
"to blame (he replied). I have all
"my life been in pursuit of Happi-
"ness; but it has hitherto fleeted
"from my grasp. I sought it in con-
"cealment; but now find, to have
"met it. I must have continued in the
"world. Again it appears; it holds
"out

“ out its extended arms: Yet those
“ embraces it is about to give will
“ not, I fear, be lasting, unless—un-
“ less—but I cannot speak. What a
“ presumption!”

“ I AM glad of it (said Mr.
“ Vaughan), as I have had an inten-
“ tion to do it all this morning. But
“ perhaps what we have to say may
“ be on very different subjects: Mine,
“ I freely own, is on the good old sub-
“ ject, matrimony.”

THEY smiled, and he continued:

“ You must know, Sir (to Mr. Co-
“ ventry), I have threescore thousand
“ pounds, which I intend to bestow
“ on your charming daughter, if you
“ consent, Sir.—This is the hand
“ that

"that must present it (taking Mr. *Edward Gore's.*) Join it, my friend, "with that of your amiable *Maria.*"

"Too much! too much, Sir (ex-
claimed Mr. *Gore*)! This is too
much! God Almighty preserve my
senses!" He went from the com-
pany; whilst *Edward*, on a bended
knee, bathed the hand of his truly-
generous benefactor with tears of
gratitude.

MR. *Coventry* was lost in admiration: He could not reply till a second time called on by Mr. *Vaughan*. When he did, it completed the happiness of all: He declared, if his daughter had no objection, not another event could give him equal satisfaction.

“LET me entreat, my dearest Miss Coventry (said the persuasive Edward, his face glowing with love), “that you will not render me miserable, just as I have drank so very deep of felicity.”

“COME, come, my cherub (added Mr. Vaughan), you cannot be cruel to my dear boy. By my troth, had I been a pretty young lady, I think I should have had him at the first word. But tell us at once, will you give Ned your heart? or will you, by your refusal, old and tough as it is, break mine?”

“I CANNOT grant what you ask, Sir (said Miss Coventry); that heart you so partially solicit is already disposed of.”

“Zounds!

" ZOUNDS ! not grant it ? not have
" my boy (cried Mr. Vaughan, stamp-
" ing up and down) ? Here's a fine
" piece of work at last ! What, after
" smiling on him so like an angel, and
" now say you have not a heart to
" give him, with a duce ! "

" PRAY, Sir (said Miss Coventry),
" let not you and I quarrel ; " holding
out her lilly hand, with ineffable
sweetness. But the old gentleman,
instead of taking it, put both his be-
hind him.

" No, no, I am not to be wheedled
" so, young Lady. Not give Ned your
" heart ! "

" PARDON me, Sir ; you mistook
" my words. - I said my heart was
" bestowed ; but did I say it was not
" in

“ in the possession of your adopted
“ son ? ”

“ HEAVENLY goodness (said the
“ enraptured *Edward*) ! Sure I have
“ never, never been unhappy ! O my
“ lovely creature, repeat these words !
“ Repeat them every hour, that I
“ may not think them an illusion.

“ My daughter, you know not (said
“ Mr. *Coventry*) how happy you make
“ me, by giving hopes that I shall call
“ this amiable youth my son.”

“ Now all is as it should be (added
“ Mr. *Vaughan*). She is more than
“ ever my cherub ! my pink ! my
“ rose ! Come, let me once more
“ (taking her hand) see that lilly you
“ just now held out to me. How
“ soft ! how smooth ! By the Lord,

Harry,

" *Harry*, I must give it one kiss!—
" But where is our friend (continued
" he)? I'll lay any wager, *Ned*, thy
" father has again buried himself.
" Prithee, ferret him out. I am al-
" most as much afraid to enter that
" place as honest *Scipio*. But see, he
" comes: Look at his eyes; they shew
" how much his worthy heart has
" been affected."

EDWARD flew to meet his parent, to acquaint him of his happiness, and to conduct him to his expecting friends. What pleasure did these tidings give him! He folded to his breast his dearest daughter; he wept over her; whilst her gentle bosom could scarce contain the joy it felt. To his noble generous friend he would have spoke; but a weight of obligations choaked his words.

MR. Vaughan saw his distress ; and, to relieve it, expressed an astonishment that Mr. Gore had shewn no curiosity to know by what miracle his son was still alive.

“ Ah, my friend (he replied), my “ Edward lives ! Is not that enough “ for me to know ? ”

“ YET, pray tell us (said Maria) “ by what means you escaped the “ dreadful flames.”

EDWARD returned a graceful bow to his fair mistress, and proceeded thus.

“ THE fire in our vessel, occasioned “ by the carelessness of a boy, burnt “ with such fury that we soon found “ all our efforts to extinguish it were “ ineffectual. I cannot paint the me-
“ lancholy

“ lancholy scene. Every one gave
“ himself up for death, which ap-
“ peared unavoidable. Some of my
“ friends, hoping to escape, threw
“ themselves into the water; but their
“ hopes were baffled. I had the af-
“ fliction to see them perish; yet, sur-
“ rounded by the merciless flames, I
“ was just going to follow their ex-
“ ample, when I saw something swim-
“ ming towards the ship. I might
“ have mistaken it for the buoy of
“ a vessel, had it not roared out my
“ name. Being come close to the
“ side, my faithful *Scipio*, for it was
“ him, jumped on board; and, with-
“ out saying more than “ Me no fear,
“ *Mafar*,” fastened my arms round
“ his neck, plunged into the sea, and
“ carried me safe to the shore.

“ I WILL not repeat the acknowledgments I made to the preserver of my life; but proceed to that moment when I threw myself at the feet of this best of men. Our joy at this meeting had in it an alloy. How unlucky that the ship in which the account of my death had been hastily transmitted to my father was already sailed, and no possibility of recalling the unfortunate letter! We wrote continually for twelve months; but, at the end of the period, received the dreadful account of my father's decease. What have I to add? Only this; that, at the request of my now only friend, I took his name, promising not to say to any person living but that I was his real son.”

“ YES

" YES (interrupted Mr. *Vaughan*,) I
" rather chose to let him pass for my
" natural son, than that his undeserv-
" ing uncle should be honoured with
" such a nephew."

SCIPIO now came skipping forwards to inform them the coach waited, and was again caressed in the warmest manner, particularly by *Maria*, who said to the elder Mr. *Gore*, as they proceeded to their carriage, " Will not ho-
" nest *Simon* and *Betty*, Sir, be a-
" larmed at your absence ? "

" MY dear child (he replied), how
" considerate are you ! I have told the
" good souls what happiness this day
" has brought me. God be thanked !
" God be thanked ! said they, and
" down they dropped on their knees.
" I joined in their pious gratitude : we
praised

"praised the Almighty for his mercies,
"and I returned with a heart less op-
"pressed than when I left you."

THEY were now come to the verge of the wood, where the coach and chariot waited. Mr. Vaughan and Mr. Gore went in the latter, pulling up the glasses as they passed through *Wheatly*, as Mr. Gore's long beard might otherwise have drawn the attention of the multitude.

WHEN they arrived at *Hartly-row*, both Mr. Gores retired to a different room from the company, where the reverend beard of the now no longer Hermit was shorn by the merciless hand of a barber, which wrought such an alteration on his person, that when he obeyed the breakfast-summons, Miss Coventry had not the least idea of her adopted

adopted father, the loss of his beard having taken off at least the appearance of twenty years from his age.

MR. *Coventry* introduced him to Lord and Lady *L*—, Miss *Hastings*, Mr. *Stormont* and Dr. *Edgcome*; each striving to outvie the other in expressions of admiration and esteem: but it was not alone confined to him; Mr. *Vaughan* and the amiable *Edward* had their share.

MARIA, whilst the elder Mr. *Gore* dressed, had related not only the transactions of that morning, but also told them their first meeting in *Combe Woods*, and his reasons for retiring to that place.

THREE weeks after this memorable day was the time insisted on by Mr. *Vaughan*

Vaughan for uniting the hands of *Edward* and *Maria*; Lord and Lady *L*— consenting to lengthen their visit, and to grace the nuptials with their presence.

Miss *Hastings*, at the intreaties of her lover, and the request of her noble relations, promised to bestow her hand at the same time. In the intermediate space they partook of every amusement the country afforded: but none gave them higher pleasure than their frequent excursions to *Combe Woods*, on which occasions *Simon* and *Betty* were their caterers.

At length the day arrived in which the happiness of *Edward* and Mr. *Stormont* was completed by doctor *Edgcome*.—On their return from the church, an elegant chariot passed them.

them.—It drove too swift to discover who were in it:—but what an agreeable surprise to Mrs. *Gore*, to be embraced on alighting by her *Lavinia*.

HERE was a new source for joy. Mr. *Harry Gore* had, at first, no recollection of his uncle; but being informed of what had happened in his absence, he flew into the arms of *Edward*, embracing him with the warmth of an affectionate brother.

I SHALL now only say, none could feel more real, more exquisite happiness than this little circle. Lord and Lady *L*—, though with infinite regret, and not till they had got a promise from the two Mr. *Gores* to bring their Ladies to town the next winter, returned to *London*, as did Mr. and Mrs. *Stormont*.

HERE

HERE I should have concluded this Work ; but thinking my Readers may be desirous to know something more of Sir *Francis*, I am fortunately enabled to satisfy their curiosity.

THE Baronet finding no persuasions, no intreaties could gain him the heart of his fair neighbour, set out post for *Millbridge*, determined to vent his spleen and ill-nature on *Lavinia* : but he arrived too late ; his sister was now the property of a man who would not suffer her to be treated with indignity.

SORELY disappointed in the low spite he meditated, and still in hopes to vex somebody, he set out for *France*, in company with his old friend and companion Sir *William More*, to whom he found means to be

be easily reconciled. Lady *Gilford*, at first, took his going much to heart, and laid the intire blame on her sister and daughter: but they found a method to moderate his anger; and about six months since her darling returned, immensely improved, in the opinion of the two Miss *Jones*'s.

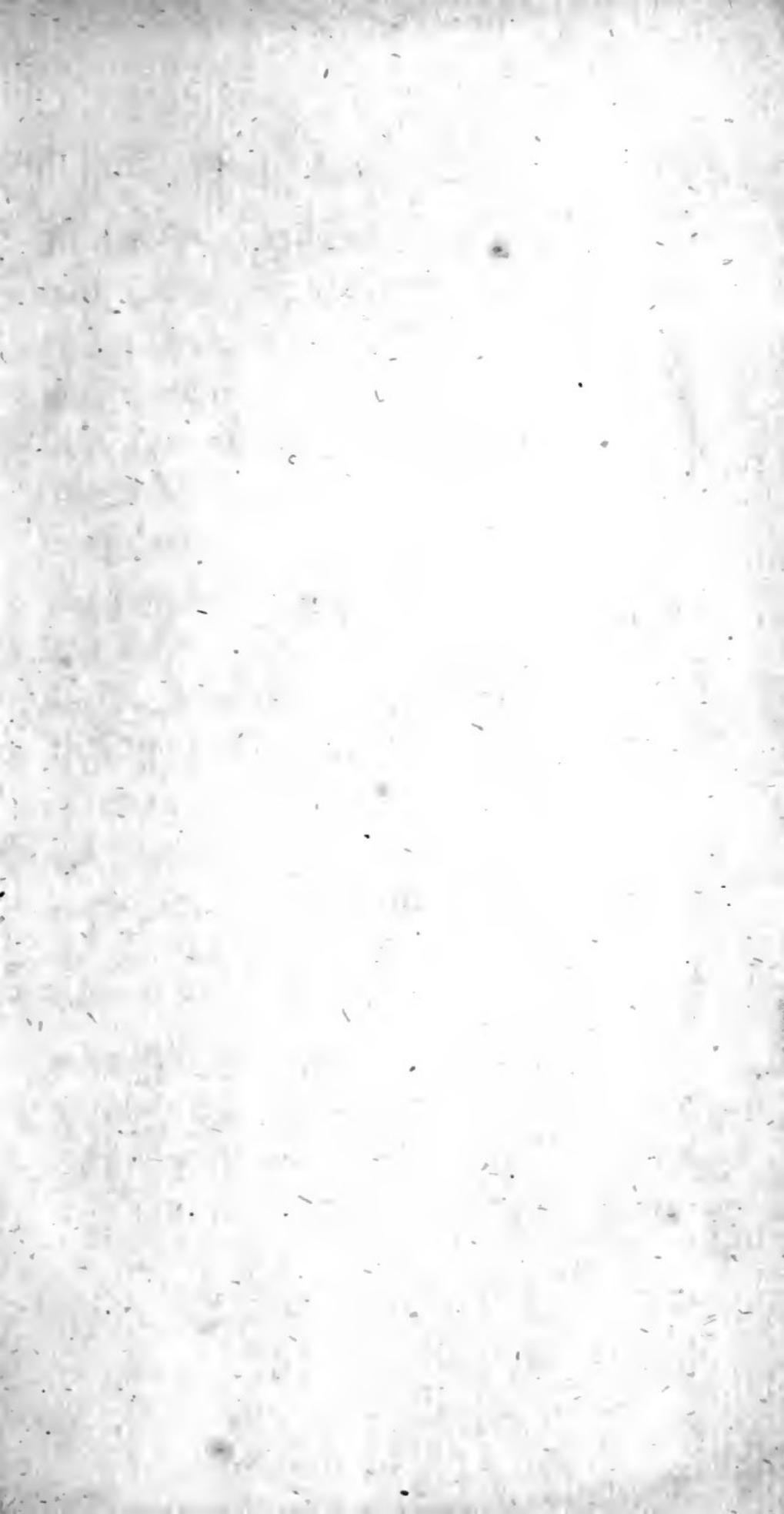
With these young Ladies he spent the greatest part of his time, which occasioned no small bickerings between the two candidates: but as Sir *Francis* happened to be the returning officer, he declared Miss *Jones* duly elected, and she took her seat at the *Grange* accordingly.

Poor Miss *Patty* would not have outlived this disappointment, if Sir *William More* had not offered himself the very next day.—She was not long considering:

considering : his title was as good as Sir *Francis's*, his estate better, and in two months Lady *More* was allowed by all the village to have much finer jewels than Lady *Gilford*: but this made not the least uneasiness between the sisters. Their husbands also live in the strictest unity :—quite a family-compact. Sir *William* is the *cicisbeo* of Lady *Gilford*, whilst Sir *Francis* returns those obligations by his civility to Lady *More*. But I shall pursue this subject no farther, determined not to dip my pen in the treble jetty ink of scandal.

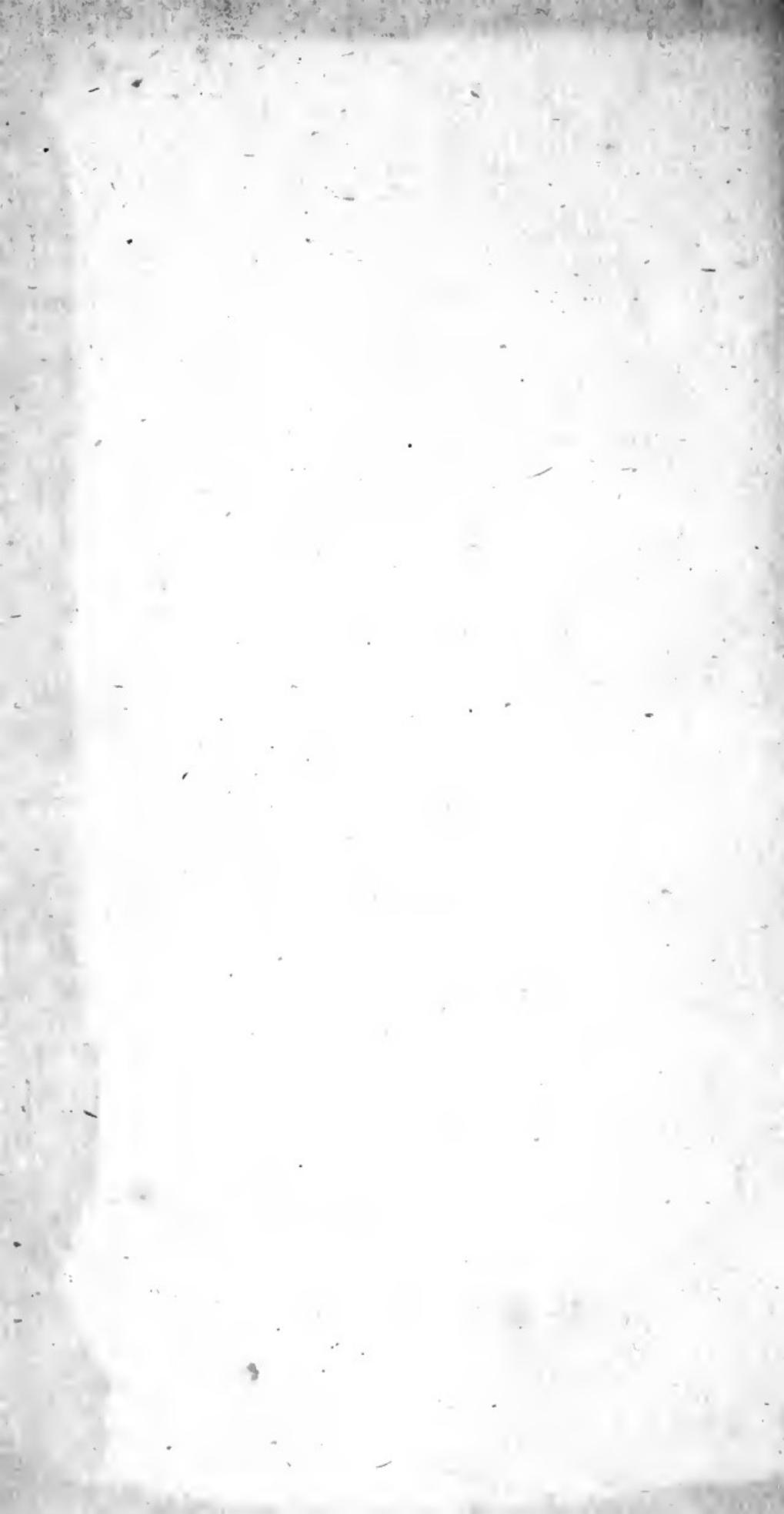
I now take leave of my Readers, wishing every married pair may be as happy as were *Edward* and his *Maria*, or *Harry* and his *Lavinia*.

F I N I S.











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